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# DEATH;

A VISION :

OR,

THE SOLEMN DEPARTURE

OF

**SAINTS AND SINNERS,**

REPRESENTED

UNDER THE SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM.

BY THE

**REV. JOHN MACGOWAN.**

And deliver them, who, through the fear of DEATH,  
were all their lifetime subject to bondage.--  
Heb. ii. 15.

He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second DEATH.--Rev. ii. 11.

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FROM THE LAST LONDON EDITION.

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CHAMBERSBURGH, Pa.

PUBLISHED BY

HICKOK & BLOOD.

1836.

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## PREFACE.

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THE favourable reception which *DEATH, a Vision*, has met with by the more pious and thoughtful; and the frequent accounts I have had of its usefulness, especially to the weary and heavy-laden Christian, have induced me to endeavour to make it, as much as possible, still more acceptable, and to print it in a more suitable form for a family book, or pocket companion, as well as greatly to enlarge upon several circumstances therein related.

The subject is of the highest importance.—Death casts the die, and unalterably fixes, forever fixes, our existence, either in a state of the purest holiness and consummate felicity, or in the blackest horror and most aggravated torments, in the howling regions of infamy and despair. It is of universal concern; all are equally interested in it; for “all must die.” This point admits of no controversy; nor can any man appeal from the awful decision. We may in other things, perhaps, allowably differ; but here our judgment must be unanimous, while we visit the tombs of our ancestors, and daily tread upon the dust once inhabited by immortal spirits. “Your fathers,—where are

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they? The prophets,—do they live forever?" Burying places discover graves of every dimension, from the infant of a span, to the swain of tallest stature. The hoary head, though frequently unnoticed, proclaims aloud the swift approach of Death to venerable age, ripening for the grave by a series of bodily infirmities. The young in years, the bloom of youth, and strength of manhood, in this unequal war, can make no greater resistance than tottering weakness. Almost every day produceth fresh testimony, that youth is by no means an insurance from death, nor robust, and brawny limbs a security from the grave. The greatest monarch comes down here to a perfect equality with the basest beggar; and the most delicate epicurean ranks only with the menial drudge or scullion in the kitchen. Neither robes of the finest lawn, nor crowns of the purest gold, have power to exempt their wearers from the pains and horrors of a gloomy death bed, and its inevitable consequences. How awful is this consideration, "God has appointed that all men once shall die!" Must it not affect the mind to think of entering into an unknown state of existence? A state, of which nothing can in this life be learned but from the word of revelation. And is it not still more awful to see, that notwithstanding the absolute certainty, and the vast importance of Death, the far greatest part of mankind pay little or no regard to its dread

solemnity ! Men in general will be more cautious and exact in their inquiries after even the most trifling commodity they purchase, than about the most suitable preparation for death. If a tradesman is about purchasing any valuable article, how diligent he is to guard against imposition ! If a gentleman purchaseth an estate, how inquisitive he is after its real value, and with what accuracy does he examine the validity of his title ! notwithstanding he is to hold it, as it were, only by the hour, or rather by the moment !

Strange it is, but it is true as strange, that the bulk of mankind will take nothing upon trust, except their everlasting concerns. O reader, if thou art one of this thoughtless herd, allow me to tell thee, that thou hast a terrible death bed, at least a terrible death before thee, which will overtake thee, and will not spare thee one moment, because of thine unpreparedness ! No : if thou remainest thoughtless, thou remainest also without excuse ; thou hast had, thou still hast, monitors enough.—The passing-bell, whose doleful sound daily salutes thine ear, calls thee to remember thy mortality ; every newspaper that thou readest, by the accounts of death in it, bids thee look forward to another world ; yea, every pain, every symptom of disease summoneth thee to prepare for thy long home. Let no man therefore say, “he had no warning of his mortality ;” seeing almost every

thing in nature, if duly attended to, proclaims it to thee. Yet man, thoughtless man, goes on under a vain show, and securely pursues earthly objects with as much assiduity as if Death had in reality no existence, and as if there was not an awful hereafter consequent upon dissolution.

Give me leave to deal plainly with thee for once my reader,—for God, thy judge, will one day, and that perhaps very soon, be plain, justly, and strictly exact with thee, and with every one; will call thee to a severe account for the thoughtlessness of thy ways; yea, and visit upon thee the sad effects of thine own inconsideration. Tremendous must that audit be, which is unthought of, and for which thou art unprovided; like the man without the wedding garment, the sinner shall remain speechless.

Thou pressest hard after the perishing riches of this world; sometimes successfully, but frequently disappointed. And what if thou couldst amass the wealth of the whole nation to thyself, so that all thy mites should increase to talents! Alas! what would this profit, if thy soul is yet a stranger to that religion which is the only preparative for a happy dissolution? A bed of state will not deter the approach of rude and uncivil disease, nor will embroidered curtains repel the shaft of Death; the silver canopy over the face will not inspire thee with one ray of hope to preserve thee from droop-



ing on the prospect of losing thine all. Couldst thou leave as many millions as thou dost pounds, to surviving heirs or to charitable uses, it would not, in the least, open upon thy heart the pleasing prospect of divine felicity, nor bribe the fangs of hell from seizing thy despairing spirit; would not even purchase thee a more tolerable station in the mansions of the damned, or one moment's respite from thine unutterable woe. Vain and insignificant wealth can only comfort in health and prosperity, but boasteth not the power of relieving when in the greatest necessity. Yet how many damn themselves by preferring thee, O delusive wealth, to Jesus and his salvation! O God, open the eyes of blind and thoughtless man, that he may be wise to consider his latter end!

Art thou a man of pleasure, and is thine heart in publick places of resort? How unworthy, then, the name of man! How much more excellent are the brutal ranks, which so faithfully answer the several ends of their existence! The very beasts that draw thee to routs and assemblies, and serve to promote thy unmanly dissipation, will bring in their several accusations; and all thine enjoyments will be swift witnesses against thee. Go on in thy life of festivity. Let every day be a renewed carnival; and every returning evening produce some new, some more pleasing revel than the former. Shut out from thine impious heart all

thoughts of God, of religion, and holiness; yet know, whoever thou art, that thou shalt die, and God will bring thee to an account for every moment of time he has allotted thee, and every mercy he has conferred upon thee! If thou livest without God in time, thou shalt also die without him, and be banished from him to eternity.

When disease shall seize thee, and Death presents his envenomed arrow at thy heart, order thou thy couch to be carried to Vauxhall, Borneillic's, the Pantheon, or some other haunt of pleasure, and try if thou canst die with more composure among the shouts of madness and bursts of foolish laughter. Yea, shroud thee in a mask, and thou shalt see that Death, commissioned, shall not miss his aim, but among the giddy crowd will select his destined victim, and as soon despatch thee at Haymarket or Convent-garden, as if secluded in the lonely desert. Shake off all restraints of decorum, cast the admonition of reason behind thee, cease from reflection, and become the perfect brute, yet shalt thou find that Death shall present objects to thee which shall demand thy attention, and bring thee to thyself again; for thou canst not fly from his strict researches.

But what shall we do, seeing Death is inevitable? Do! Shake off the sensual brute, and return to the exercise of reason. Remember, that you are endued with intellects capable of reflection; and

although you should live brutal lives, you shall not have the privilege of dying like them, but must make your appearance before the eternal God, undergo the scrutiny of infinite Holiness, and be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil. If thou never bowed thy knee to the God that made thee, do it now; and beg of him to teach thee to act becoming a rational being, accountable to thy Maker for all thy procedure. Seek his will in the volume of Revelation; so shalt thou be taught, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that there is no holiness but what ariseth from being born again.—Therefore, “ye must be born again,” in order to die happy, and live forever blessed. Let whoever pleases, laugh at the proposition; their impious sneers will yield to thee no manner of excuse, when God shall demand thy spirit. I therefore take my leave of the thoughtless reader, by leaving this memento with him: “Remember, O man, that thou must and shalt die!”

I shall now beg leave to address you whom God hath made sensible of the necessity of a Saviour, and of the awful importance of an enduring existence. Great are your privileges! and great your obligations! From Death you have nothing to fear; come when it will, it must come to you in a friendly manner; for it shall go well with them that fear the Lord. Mark; take particular notice

of that man whose ways are perfect, whose heart is sincere, and earnestly thirsts after, and strives to attain, that pleasing conformity to the Divine will, from which our first father fell by transgression.— Behold the upright, who is the same in his family or closet that you see him in church assembly. The end, the death, and death bed of that man, is peace and holy serenity, and calm composure, which neither earth nor hell can disturb. This peace, which accompanies the latter end of the Christian, is the peace of God, by him bestowed, and by him maintained, and centres in the enjoyment of his sacred presence; and is such a peace as never yet filled the bosom of an unconverted sinner, and therefore absolutely beyond the comprehension of unassisted reason. Life may be gloomy while in the tabernacle. The way may be rugged, and the path uneven, so that the wary pilgrim may come halting to his end; but that shall crown the work; and the peaceful end shall eradicate every sensation of former pain: so that your troubles shall be remembered only as waters that have passed away, and all before you will be pleasing and delightful. A few days of adversity will give place to an eternity of pleasure; an eternity of undecaying comfort being forever behind, and still to be enjoyed. In all your afflictions with which an all-wise God sees meet to exercise you, it will be for your consolation to bear their prom-

ised end in view. Even in this life they shall bring forth in you the peaceable fruits of righteousness, while they are working out for you, according to the beautiful language of inspiration, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of joy."

What a beautiful climax! what an ascent of blessing is here, springing from a source so unpromising! That afflictions, which burden us while in this tabernacle, should be called light, may to inexperience appear something strange; yet light they are in comparison of the weight of judgment due unto sin's demerit; light in comparison of the unspeakable sorrows actually sustained by our adorable Lord and Saviour; and light in comparison of that vast weight of glory, which God, our Almighty Father, takes occasion by them to work out in our behalf. Nor is it less strange to hear our affliction, which frequently attends us from the cradle to the tomb, represented but as for a moment; yet, when compared with that perpetual felicity so fast approaching, life, though drawn out to the age of Methusalem, sinks into nothing. Yet even this light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work for us a far—more—exceeding—and eternal weight of glory! Here is a weight of glory, instead of light afflictions! a great weight of glory!--a greater weight of glory!--a far greater weight of glory!--far greater than we can ask or think of, or in any way deserve!--a far greater

weight of glory than could ever have been obtained by the most perfect legal obedience!—a far more exceeding weight of glory!—and, to crown all, a far more exceeding, and *eternal* weight of glory!! To set forth the issue of the saint's afflictions, this eloquent apostle has exhausted the power of language. Farther we could not go; eternity must discover the rest! Let patience, then, have its perfect work; and let contentment be the object of your pursuit: it is no matter what bitter ingredients are mingled in your cup; it is the prescription of Infinite Wisdom, and therefore must be salutary.

But Death is awful; you know not how to bear the thoughts of dying. Why should the weary have any objection to laying him down to rest? or the hungry beggar to entering into the banqueting house? Death is, indeed, a dark and gloomy porch; but it is the gate of thy Father's house: and will not the loving, the longing child, venture through a few moment's gloom, in order to get at the dear embrace of a Father, so loving and so compassionate?—You must pass the gate, in order to enter the mansion that so long has waited your arrival: and your Lord, your blessed friend and forerunner, hath taken care to remove out of the way every thing noxious and finally hurtful: he shall vouchsafe his amiable and lovely presence, in the mount of straits and valley of thy fears, and shall

make thy Death perfectly safe and salutary, perhaps even desirable and easy. To the saint of God for the most part, the bitterness of Death is past before Death itself arrives ; so that upon its arrival, he does not find it to be that terrible and tremendous thing to die which he once apprehended. O my God, vouchsafe me thy sensible presence in my last hour ! then shall I esteem my Death an inestimable benefit, and my last hours the most precious of my temporal life ; and even with my dying breath I will magnify the precious name of Jesus my beloved.

Once more, let me recommend it to you, as you wish to live honorably and die in comfort, to cultivate those tempers and principles that are likely to have your approbation on a death bed. I am either greatly mistaken in respect to the nature of Christianity, or some people of eminent rank in the church of Christ must undergo a very great revolution in the temper and disposition of their minds, before they are to have a comfortable Death ; an angry, a revengeful, an implacable temper, very ill agrees with the genius of the gospel-dispensation, and with our character, as the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, who, with his dying breath, cried out, “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do ! ” Let this ever be remembered, that it is not a well informed head, and clear knowledge of gospel truth, which can

diffuse either peace through the heart, or imprint the image of Jesus upon the soul, if a sanctified heart, if heavenly tempers and dispositions of mind, are wanting. The one may, indeed, give you the name; but it is the other that gives you the nature of a Christian. It has been a melancholy observation, in which I am afraid there is too much justice, that some professors, most eminent for gospel knowledge, are most remarkably deficient in regard to the spirit of Christianity; and think, indeed, that they ought to behave ill to those who are less clear in their doctrinal sentiments, or have the unhappiness to differ from them in some favourite article. But what an unfavourable idea is this likely to give infidels of even the Gospel itself, as they are glad to lay hold of every blemish in the Christian character, and to charge the blessed Gospel with the defects of its abettors! I freely confess, that if I had not been favoured with some acquaintance with the nature, power, and spirit of the Gospel myself, what I have seen of the spirit and conduct of professors, must unavoidably have fixed on my heart an indelible disgust against revealed religion in general; therefore it is easy to account for the unhappy increase of Deists and Free-thinkers, so observable in Britain at this period. There is such a thing as saying without doing; as defending the truths of the gospel in word, and denying them in the spirit of our



whole conduct. Ought not, then, every lover of gospel truth, to look well to his spirit and conversation, lest he should effectually injure the blessed Gospel which he desires to promote, and which alone can yield him peace and composure in his dying moments.

There is no way so likely to soften the tempers, and regulate the passions of man, as to cultivate an acquaintance with death bed solemnities, and strive to keep an eternity in view. It is only in proportion to this, that we can either think or act becoming the Christian. This habit of mind, conversant with eternity, has many peculiar advantages connected with it, and is of the greatest utility in the religious life; such as making afflictions, which otherwise would seem long and severe, to appear what they really are; but light and momentary, naturally leads us into such an acquaintance with our own personal weakness, that we can bear with the weaknesses of others, and exercise forbearance even to our greatest enemies,—makes the honour of religion, the peace and tranquility of the church, and the spread of the Redeemer's glory, the first objects of our pursuit: in comparison of which, all other concerns will seem but light and trivial; besides that familiar acquaintance with it, which in the issue shall make Death itself desirable and easy; which is rarely the case with those who are but little given to bear in mind

the solemnities of their dissolution. The pilgrim cannot forget his native country, nor the exile the house of his fathers; how then can it be that the Christian, under the exercise of grace, shall forget the land of his inheritance!

The following little Tract was written within the immediate views of Death, and when eternity made very awful impressions on the heart of the Author. The mode of it was chosen with a view to make it more entertaining, while it conveyed the necessary instruction to the mind. The substance of it, notwithstanding, is taken from facts which have fallen under his own observation; and it is hoped, that, through the divine blessing, the truths conveyed in it will produce their evidence in the believing heart. I trust I can say that I am thankful for the accounts I have had of its usefulness, and bless God that any feeble attempt of mine should be owned to his people's edification. I have taken fresh pains in preparing the present edition for the press, and what alterations I have made, are such as seemed to me calculated to promote its usefulness, and make it more agreeable to the serious reader. I have only to add, that I beg my reader to impute the plainness of speech I have used in the Preface, to a warm desire of seeing the true spirit of religion prevail among professors, and to be useful to the souls of my fellow-sinners.

Now, that the Holy-Ghost may attend the reading of "Death, *a vision*" with its special influence, that it may answer the end for which it is now again sent into the world, is, and I trust shall ever be, the Author's prayer. Amen.



# DEATH:

## A VISION

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### PART I.

IT was about twelve months ago, that my mind, as is but too frequent with me, void of stability, rambled from one theme to another, and for a considerable time, continued its vagary to that degree, that I found myself utterly incapable of fixing my attention on any subject that presented itself, however interesting or important it might seem. At last, an awful subject,—DEATH,—all-conquering DEATH!—presented itself to me; and that not in a very desirable manner, but in all the deformities of an implacable enemy to nature. This unwelcome, though important visitant, engrossed my attention in such a manner, that for a fortnight's space I maintained an almost constant intercourse with that awful production of Sin. Throughout the whole length of the day, whether I was in the closet, at the table, or taking a turn on the flowery banks of the Severn, my friendly neighbour, I was always employed in viewing the features of his awful countenance; marking, as well as I could, the proportions of his parts, and duly observing his formidable retinue. It was thus I employed myself, while the cheering sun illumined our horizon, and nature rejoiced in his genial rays; Nor

was I less intent on the awful subject when silent night spread her sable curtains over the kingdom, and invited the labourer to refreshing rest; for either my eyes resisted the leaden influence of sleep, or the visiting slumber brought the thoughts of DEATH along with it. One particular instance of my nocturnal conversation with that universal pillager, I esteem not unworthy of a publick hearing; therefore shall do myself the pleasure of relating it.

It happened one night, after I had been deeply ruminating through the day on the awful subject, that when I was in bed I could not compose myself for several hours to rest, but numbered the clock from eleven till two; so deep was the impression which the exercise of the day had left upon my mind. Then it was that I felt the power of an alarmed imagination; for in one strain of thought I fancied I beheld the dreadful monster approaching me with his open commission in one hand, and a resistless dart in the other, with which he intended piercing my reluctant heart, and the hated grave close at his heels, yawning with eager desire for a prey. The man who knows the extent of his own fortitude, and the prowess of nature's arm, will not brand me with cowardice, though I tell him, that such a striking discovery made my timorous nature shrink, and turn its back on the inflexible enemy:

*Hard work, alas! to join the fray with death,  
Unless defended from his baleful sting.*

At another time, I fancied I saw the tyrant in

the form of a dragon, wreathing his tremendous bulk beneath the feet of a glorious Personage, who bore five overflowing wounds, which he received on the day that haughty DEATH imagined the heavenly country was added to his earthly dominions. Indeed, well might the insatiable tyrant conceive such a presumptuous thought, seeing, strange as it may seem, the Lord, the fountain of life himself, had fallen into his hands; nor did the regardless monster pay the least deference to his immaculate person. But well for him it was, that as the Saviour fell, he seized the king of terrors in his most hideous form, and wrenched from him the fatal sting,—the sad repository of all his strength—and disabled him of the least hurtfulness to the chosen race. This holy Conqueror, for reasons known to himself, and profitable to us, was pleased to visit the dwellings of the dead, and, for a season, submitted himself to the arrest of DEATH. But the third blest morning come,—he shook the dust from him,—burst the barriers of the tomb,—forsook the confines of DEATH, and in holy triumph, held forth the poisonous sting, and said, *I have overcome DEATH, and him that had the power of DEATH!!* When I was indulged with this mental vision, I thought that emboldened Nature collected its force, and advanced to gaze on the expiring monster. O! thought I, if I could always view that cruel adversary in his stingless condition, sprawling at the feet of the wonderful Conqueror, I could meet him with as little fear as a child would sport himself with a harmless lamb. But, alas! I often looked forward with fear, and some-

times with horror, to that momentous period that shall fix, forever fix my state of existence in an unalterable station of weal or woe. To be incapable of discerning any thing alluring in life, any thing attractive in this world, and yet to dread a departure from it,—to have no satisfying discovery made of that world of spirits where Immanuel reigns in triumph, nor of the safety of the passage from earth to heaven,—how dismal the case! how gloomy, how threatening the prospect! As I was meditating on these awful subjects, gentle slumber seized me with its lulling charms, and soon wafted me into the arms of downy sleep, where I lay the rest of the night, inactive in body, DEATH having imprinted his image upon me.

In the mean while, the more vigilant mind, after her usual manner, rambled abroad through unmeasured space. Mounted on an agile fancy, she soon explored the vast meridian from pole to pole; then changing her course, she winged her flight across the countries, from the eastern depth to the occidental shore; and, in its rapid journey, my fruitful fancy lined out a numerous train of visionary objects: so that now I had work enough cut out for the residue of the night, in turning over these phantoms of the mind.

I dreamed, that in one place I beheld the most beautiful garden that ever I had seen represented by any type or print whatsoever, and which I presume could be equalled only by Eden in its original beauty. In the midst of this delightful garden arose a fountain, not of water, but of a slimy substance, bearing something of the resemblance of



boiling pitch. I thought that the fountain flowed apace, and sent forth innumerable streams to every quarter of the globe, in such a plenty, that it diffused itself abroad through every corner of the land, insomuch that every inhabitant was less or more debauched with the polluting matter. Gentlemen in scarlet and lace, and ladies adorned with silver and gold brocades, I beheld smeared with the filth of the fountain. From the high possessor of the royal chair, down to the despised Lazarus, all were polluted, though many of them perceived not the stain. Many of those streams joining in one, composed a river of a prodigious force, which passed through a spacious plain; and multitudes of people of both sexes, high and low, rich and poor, of all denominations and persuasions, young and old, I saw rolling in the filthiness of the stream. Some swimming, others wading; some faster, others slower, down the noisome channel; some sipping, others lapping the foam of the unnatural billows: but all going along with the stream, which, I perceived, disembogued itself on the other side of this world, in “a lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

In an other place I saw an infinite number of people, old and young, rich and poor; some decked with ornamental embroideries, rich brocades, delightful damasks, &c.; others hardly covered with deforming rags; some with their coaches, landaus, &c.; attended with a numerous retinue; some on horseback, following a pack of hounds; others running on foot: but all pursuing the same

chase. This promiscuous body, as I thought, formed itself into a circle of a wide diameter, around the mouth of a dreadful volcano. Every member of the mixed multitude held an uninterrupted pursuit around the ring. Those who rode in coaches, chariots, and landaus, went foremost in the mad procession; those who strode the martial horse, were next unto them; and the poorer sort, who tramped on foot, hied after as fast as they could. When I beheld the ardour of the crowd, I could not help admiring what a valuable prize it might be, which prompted them to run with alacrity, and that even within the views of danger; till at length I espied what are commonly called the pleasures of the flesh, transformed into immaterial butterflies, a cloud of which cut their uneven flight around the above named circle, and danced as wantons within a very small distance of the first rank of the pursuers; and many of them, as straggling flies, mixed themselves with the various ranks of the rag-end of the multitude: and all the crowd, as I thought, were intent on catching the giddy flies, ever hoping and ever disappointed.

Sometimes the pursuers got within arm's-length of the leading flies; then they snatched with eager grasp, nothing doubting but the long-sought prize at last was won. But O the power of deceit! as soon as the enthusiast opened his hand, he saw, with grief, that the fly had eluded his vigilance, however often it fluttered near him. Thus disappointed, they doubled their efforts, and increased their speed, in order to accomplish the desired end; but this, notwithstanding all their en-

deavours, I conceived to be impracticable: for although the butterflies always kept in view, so subtle were they, they never could be caught; and yet so alluring was their mazy dance, that the mad pursuers, prompted with hope of attaining, could not be prevailed with to desert the chase, although at every turn, one or more of the company fell into the pit from whence there is no redemption.— But as the volcano in the centre received those whose race was run, others from the outside joined the ranks, and filled up the space of the persons lost. And thus it was at every turn; for they were always drawing nearer and nearer to the pit, and thus they continued as long as I beheld them.

In the third place, I saw, in a spacious field, a prodigious number of people, mostly old, or middle-aged, extremely busy, and working upon their hands and knees, for whom I was touched with the tenderest emotions of pity, looking upon them to be in a state of the most abject slavery, but could not, for a time, comprehend the nature of their servitude, being altogether unacquainted with so strange a sort of labour. Their actions seemed much to resemble those of a mole, for their hands and feet, and every other organ, were closely employed; but their heads, their plodding heads, were principally concerned in the work: and what before I took to be such servile drudgery, I soon learned to be their chief, if not their only pleasure. O! with what alacrity did they rout with their heads, mole-like, in the earth, in quest of somewhat! but what it was, I could not at first comprehend, till after lending a close attention for

some time to their motions, I perceived them to pick up certain particles of yellow dust, with somewhat of a brilliant gloss; which as soon as found, they kissed, and hid in a cavern very near the heart. Many of those diligent gentry I saw fall prostrate before the refulgent heap, and thus addressed it: "Gold! adorable gold! thou blessed effect of mine own industry! be thou ever preserved safe in my possession; and I desire no other good, no other blessing, but thee! Increase, O increase upon me! for thou answerest all things; and I can be happy only in the possession of thee! Avaunt, every pilfering rogue! ye poor and needy, keep forever at a distance from my dwelling, and reap the reward of your slothfulness! And, O my gold! continue to rest in these blessed coffers, blessed only by thy presence! Instead of roving ever here take up thy abode; for I vow, that my morning homage, and evening adoration, shall be paid to none but thee!" I saw, as I thought, some of them rout a whole summer's day, and prove very unsuccessful, finding few or none of these shining particles of dust: others were more successful; and, every time they dived into the earth, brought forth, some less, others more of the fulgent clay, and disposed of it so as to endue it with such a generative quality, as annually to beget and bring forth more of its own species. Others I saw who routed long and sore, but no increase ensuing, they fell into a visible discontent, and cursed the partial earth, which bestowed her favours on others, as they thought, less worthy than themselves. Some there were who toiled

long, and were very successful in the routing way, having heaped much of that precious dust together; but to their lasting mortification, some cunning neighbour, by a most masterly artificé, got beyond and robbed them of the adored metal.-- Others diligently routed both night and day in the earth, and with the utmost care disposed of their increase in some place of safety; but in despite of all their industry and care, they were mortified to the last degree, when they perceived their own children, who played about their knees, and whom they loved above all things next to their gold, had been more dexterous in scattering the heaps abroad, than they themselves in collecting them. Likewise some were there, who by long and incessant fatigue, had the pleasure of gathering much of this yellow dust together; but ere they were aware, while standing in an adoring posture before it, suddenly sunk into the earth, and I saw them no more: but where they went to take their abode, I do not at present determine; only this I saw, their memory was soon forgotten, and the next heir reaped the fruit of their industry. Others there were who, with indefatigable diligence, had got almost enough of this brilliant dust; but ere the fool considered that it was perishable, he had the unspeakable grief of seeing it all swept away by some shower, or burned by some flash of lightning, sent on purpose by the angry Heavens: on which disaster some of them became quite disconsolate, and went mourning even to the grave. Others, of more heroic fortitude, having sustained loss, immediately clapped down on their hands and knees, and went

to work with their heads on the earth, and routed with double diligence, resolving by all means, just or unjust, to repair their ruined heaps. Having had a full view of this routing brotherhood, I could not forbear thinking, that a people so nearly resembling the mole in its dispositions and actions, might, with a good deal of propriety, be named Human Moles.

But tired with beholding the paltry actions of this grovelling society, I thought I bent my course to another domain, where I saw a lofty tower, the top of which transcended the hoary clouds, for aught I know, as far as they are higher than the earth; perhaps many times as far. The tower was built in a pyrimidical form, divided into great variety of stories, with a kind of winding way on the out side, which led from one story to another; and you must think that a very dangerous way it seemed, seeing it had no battlements to guard its ascendants. On every story were built certain pinnacles, or small towers, beautifully adorned with garlands of flowers, plumes of feathers, titles of state, names of honour, &c., and on the top of the tower was a figure of clay, overlaid with the appearance of gold. This image was formed in the shape of a woman,—beautiful at first sight, but whose features appeared grosser the longer you looked at her. She seemed to be crowned with gold, and adorned with sparkling diamonds, and a zone studded with precious stones, begirt her swelling loins; over her head was raised an azure canopy embroidered with the finest gold. In one hand she held titles and names; in the other a re-

gal sceptre; and, in an inviting posture, she stood on a marble pedestal, with this alluring motto written on her escutcheon: "The valiant hero who hath courage enough to climb up to me, shall enjoy me." O what bustle was here among people of all ranks! striving who could soonest ascend the sides of the tower; each striving to possess himself of some place of eminence, without considering the dangers to which they were exposed by their aspiration! Often have I seen the contention of the turf, but never did I see such jockeying as was here; scarcely any thing but jostling and crossing the way, was to be seen among them. When one was ascended a few steps above the vulgar level, and fancied himself secure of a place of eminence, another, prompted thereto by envy, or some other principle equally vicious, came up to him, tripped up his heels, and precipitated him into the moat which surrounded the tower; for it ought to be observed, that this tower was surrounded by a horrible puddle, into which many of those who sought to ascend, were plunged with violence, before they knew themselves to be in danger, either by jockeying of their opponents, or, even when seated upon the long-desired pinnacle, by some eddy gust bursting from the bosom of the tower, and precipitating them lower than they had been before. However, some few there were, who with indefatigable diligence, attained almost the top of the tower, and on the spiral point of the pinnacles they swaggered with waving arms, and in a contemptuous manner, looked on the gazing crowd that stood below, eager beyond measure to obtain a smile of their lord-

ships. Herein, however, I thought the crowd was greatly disappointed; for no sooner were any of these gentry put in possession of a pinnacle, but instantly they drank of the obliviating waters of Lethe, and totally forgot the men upon whose shoulders they climed to those seats of eminence. Nevertheless, so deeply infatuated were those who stood below, that they not only worshiped the grandeur which they themselves had put upon them, but stretched their expectations beyond imagination, of receiving some convincing proof of their gratitude. But former depressions utterly forgot, the worthy gentlemen dwelt in their secure pomp, till, in an unhappy hour, a ruffling blast burst swiftly upon them, and furiously whirled them from their seats of honour.

Some two or three ascended even to the marble pedestal, where they sat, adorned with plumes of feathers, but could hardly be seen of the populace below. One thing concerning them, I could not but think remarkable; sometimes they appeared like a lamb; then like a lion or bear; and if at any time the wind beat high upon them, they transformed themselves into a willow, and bended beneath the blast; otherwise into a stream, and thus elude the iron hand of danger: and when the storm was over, they appeared like themselves again; and the haughty madam looked down upon them with a smile of complacency.

But of all the multitude, there was only one who sat immediately at her feet, in a royal chair; upon whose head she rested her hand, and owned him her darling son. This favorite was a bloom-



ing majestic youth, in whose countenance was to be seen wisdom and magnanimity written in legible characters: and, with deportment altogether different from those who sat near him, he looked down with an air of affection upon all the ranks below him.

But strange as it may seem, this worthy personage, notwithstanding his merit and elevated station, did not appear to be the most happy man in the world; for it was not difficult to see anxious cares, and perplexing fears, crawling as so many snakes, round the seat of majesty. I thought then that surely the higher a man is in station, he is the more emphatically wretched, unless he can hug the servile chain like the mutable sons of Proteus, or has learned to live above the caprice of fortune. I thought in my dream, that by what means soever any pinnacle threw its rider, or however dirty his fall might be, that no sooner was the place proclaimed empty, than numbers strove who should first vault into it. Here I saw a curate aiming at a vicarage, a vicar at a bishoprick, and a bishop striving for an archiepiscopal see. Here I saw a valet aspiring to the fine gentleman, a baronet aiming at an earldom, and a country squire coveting the direction of the nation. Here I saw also a private sentinel aiming at a halberd, a halbidier at a captain's place, a captain earnestly suing for a regiment, and Prude, my lady's woman, affecting the name of madam. For my own part, when I saw the follies of mankind, I could not help wishing that they were again blessed with the right use of their reasons.

At last, more staid, I found myself in the middle of a spacious field, decorated with all the variety of nature in bloom; the freshest verdancy was the velvet-like ground-work, embroidered with a richer variety of perfect colours than ever the delicate pencil of Apelles left on the stained canvass. I walked along, admiring its beauties, ravished with the fragrancy of the full-blown flowers, which as oriental gems, richly decorated the enamelled plain. Here I beheld the glory of the divine Creator, sparkling in every verdant pile which decked the spreading lawn, in such a manner, that seeing could not satisfy the eye. Nor was my ravished ear less delighted with the tuneful voice of the early lark, as ascending she sung morning anthems to her almighty Preserver. Like masters of musick, equally fired with a sense of gratitude, the black-bird and thrush, emulous of song, poured their flowing harmony abroad through the vault of ether, as if scorning to be outdone in praise to their common Parent. Pleased to see the spangled field join in concert with the feathered songsters, who sent forth their chirping melody from the flowery hedges; the one cheerfully singing, the other sweetly smelling, the great Creator's praise! "O man!" said I "lord of this lower creation, what blessings dost thou enjoy beyond the most extensive privileges of all thy neighbours, the inhabitants of air, earth, and water! Conscience, reason, and understanding; an erect posture of body; sole dominion over all the numberless ranks of creatures, animate and inanimate, which possess this earthly globe; they are all thine by divine dona-

tion! they all were made for thine enjoyment! Such are thine invaluable privileges, joined with an ever enduring existence, and a capacity fitted for the possessing of an Infinite Good!"

These are blessings peculiar to the state of favoured man, and for which only depraved man is capable of being unthankful. But O! let humanity blush at the awful consideration; notwithstanding all our enjoyments, we, only we men, are idle when universal nature joins in general concert to speak the great Creator's praise! Ungrateful man! shall the sun, the moon, and stars, with all the hosts of heaven, unceasing move in general concord, and harmoniously show forth the praises of God! Must the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and all the inhabitants of the waters, be concerned in the enchantment of his manifest glories; and thou, above all others, most beloved and most indulged, alone remain dumb in the general concert; worse than dumb, even refractory! The horse, that now glories to prance under thy weight, the vine, which bleeds to satiate thine intemperance, the people of the feathered nation, whose little carcasses must now indulge thy gluttony, will one day severally appear as the swiftest witnesses against thee. Thou ingrateful abusers of many blessings! what will become of thee when thy soul is demanded? How wilt thou stand before an infinitely holy God? Dreadful thine account! for God is just, as well as beneficent.

I thought in my dream, that as I was thus ruminating, I was greatly surprised, by seeing the monster DEATH enter the field, through a breach which sin had made in its fences. He appeared

at first in the form of a skeleton, with quiver and darts, as he is usually drawn, The most barbarous rage and inflexible cruelty sat brooding over his hollow eyes, while his unseemly fingers grasped the irresistible scythe; the mattock and spade wrought in a field of corruption, with the resemblance of empty shades frisking over it, was the skeleton's flag. Close behind him, almost treading on his heels, followed a lean ill-looking figure, with extended jaws; at the sight of which, my blood chilled in my veins, and my flesh shuddered with perfect aversion. Nor was this aversion peculiar to me, for I perceived that all Nature seemed to fly from its presence; and, indeed, well might Nature tremble at the thoughts of an encounter, for the same hunger-bitten follower of DEATH cast a languishing look on every object, and yawned with desire to devour it.

I thought that DEATH was no sooner entered the field, than this meagre and greedy attendant addressed himself to him, in a craving manner, crying "Give! give!" on which the cruel skeleton brandished his shafts, and fiercely threw from his unerring hand, first at one, then at another object, till whole nations fell almost at once beneath his fatal javelin. One instance, in particular, I saw, of a whole generation being swept away by one stroke of his scythe. Such was the amazing power he had obtained from complicated Sin, that all, especially mankind, fell at the first touch of the destructive dart! as soon as fallen, this detested monster licked them up, and the world saw them no more forever! Here I saw, that this grand de-

vourer made no distinction between this and that, but fed with as much delight on the flesh of a beggar as on that of princes and nobles: the celebrated beauty, and the youthful hero, afforded no greater relish to the hungry grave, than the country landlady, or rustic swain: old and young, beautiful and unseemly, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, were confusedly jumbled together in its insatiable entails.

At a very small distance from this king of terrors, followed a tall, upright personage, of the exactest symmetry in all parts; her mien was noble, and all her gestures uniform. This royal and majestic person sat on the seat of right judgment, held a pair of equal balances in her hand, and had for her motto, "I judge according to every man's works." I thought that this upright lady, who was in herself the most perfect beauty, invested DEATH with dreadful array, and equipped him in most of his terrors; as every human creature who fell a prey to the ravager, was immediately weighed in her impartial balances. O! said I, on seeing the procession, if weighed in these equal and impartial balances, who is he that shall not be found wanting!

Last of all, in the train of the skeleton, followed a monster of devilish birth, and of such a form as I had never seen before: it kept its eye, as I thought, continually fixed on the upright lady, whose name was Justice, making inquisition for blood. To this monster was given every person whose actions did not weigh according to the rules of the sanctuary; and they were all stored in its

incorrupting bowels. What was very strange, notwithstanding all the persons given to this insatiable monster remained entire within it, it continued as solicitous for more, as it was at the first moment of its being. Then I thought of that saying, DEATH and HELL are never satisfied.

I stood a considerable time, admiring the strangeness of the scene, and soon I discovered something more; for DEATH metamorphosed himself into a dragon of an enormous size, and approached near the place where I had taken my standing for observation. Fearful lest I should be the prey at which he aimed, I began to think of methods of resistance, as I could not reconcile myself to the thoughts of the grave; nor was I certified at that time, that I should escape hell, if he seized me. Up he came within a very small distance of me, which greatly roused my apprehensions of danger: but to my unspeakable joy, he turned off to the left, followed by his dreadful retinue; and, turning my eye to that side of the field, I soon discovered the prey at which he aimed. A beauteous lady, in all the grandeur of life, decked with the richest silks, adorned with gold, pearls and precious stones, attended by a numerous train of obedient servants, she herself glistening like a goddess in the midst of them; every attendant carefully observed the glance of her eye, the wave of her hand, or the nod of her head, having learned by these signs to read her ladyship's pleasure.

At first, I was much amazed to see this jovial company altogether unapprehensive of danger; none of them seemed to regard the monster's ap-

proach, but maintained their jollity with as much delight as if DEATH had never been born. Touched with pity, I waved my hand to awake their attention, and entreated them to beware of yonder dragon; but at that instant I beheld a god, who is said to be president over this world, raise a dust, and spread a mist before their eyes, so that they could not discern the parts of the destroyer, therefore they rejected my admonitions, scorned my favour, and bid me begone for a prating fool. But, seeing their imminent danger, and moved with concern for them, I disregarded their clamorous speeches, hardened my countenance against shame and lifted up my voice higher and higher, using many arguments to persuade them that the monster DEATH was even then at hand, to devour one or more of them, but all in vain! for they would receive none of my admonitions, and mocked at my zealous concern. At last, unhappy moment! the inexorable Tyrant came up with them, and with forked talons seized my lady in the midst of her jocularities. But O how would it have shocked you, to see the consternation she was in, when she first perceived herself envenomed by his poisonous sting! Convinced that her time in this world was just at an end, and to the last degree unwilling to venture into a new state of existence, so much unknown to the best of men, and the dread of those who are ignorant of God, O what would she not have given for a short reprieve! Never did criminal at the bar endure such horror when the awful judge denounced the tremendous sentence, as this wretched lady felt on the dismal

prospect of futurity ! If gold and silver could have redeemed her from DEATH, she would freely have given as much as would build a cathedral, parted with her attendants and finery, and lived in adversity the residue of her days ; or if she might have been exempted from the dreadful encounter, she would have given up the beloved pleasures of plays, operas, and dancing assemblies. But, alas ! no bribe, nor promises of future amendment, could turn aside the resistless arrow, or procure the once gay delinquent the shortest respite.

She implored the aid of her skilful physician, attended by the faithful apothecary ; yea, a whole troop of the faculty were summoned to exercise all their wisdom, by any means to resist the rapacity of the inexorable Tyrant ; but all in vain ! for sad experience proved, that no medicine, however skilfully prepared, is a sufficient antidote against the poison of DEATH's cankered sting ; therefore the lady, however reluctant, was forced to submit to the Monarch of terrors.

Lest the length of my dream should render it tedious to my readers, if told at once, I shall divide it into several parts, and shall stop here for the first time.



## PART II.

Having had a full view of all that passed between DEATH and the lady, I could not forbear reflecting on the folly of inconsiderate mortals, who are every hour, for aught they know, exposed to DEATH; and yet live altogether strangers to a certain and approaching eternity. It is awful, indeed, to banish the thoughts of futurity from the mind, and assiduously bury every serious reflection in the moat of sensuality; to rush from one profane delight to another, till unwelcome DEATH puts an end to our career, and serves us as he did the unhappy lady: O what profit is there, said I, in separating less or more time, every day, for intimate fellowship with DEATH! In all probability, when grace is given so to do, our conflict with that merciless Tyrant is far from being so terribly dreadful. It is true, I profess but a very small acquaintance with men and things, yet I cannot but conjecture, that one reason why this lady and her acquaintance so utterly detested discourses concerning DEATH, might be, because such discourses naturally tend to strip the pleasures of the flesh of all their imaginary charms. Then, said I again, O blessed, discriminately blessed of the Lord, are they, whose exalted pleasures can consist with the most intimate acquaintance and fellowship with DEATH! They, and only they, are fit to enter the lists with that formidable enemy, who can in life

maintain converse with him, without spoiling the pleasure of the day.

I thought in my dream, that DEATH, having finished his business with madam, transformed himself from the appearance of a dragon into the likeness of a grave and not uncomely personage, clothed in a long flowing white robe, which hid all his native deformities. Thus equipped, he directed his course towards me, which once again put me into a panick, lest I should be the destined prey, notwithstanding he was not now so terrible as before; but as the all-directing Power ordained it, he passed by me, his rout now lying to the right. My attention being wholly engrossed by the achievements of that terrible hero, I turned my eye after him, and at no great distance beheld a man of a middle age, and an upright mien, to whom he marched with all possible speed. No sooner was this good man apprised of his approach, than with a becoming serenity of countenance he went forth to meet him, and thus addressed him: "come in thou blessed of the Lord, for I long to be dissolved, that my better part may appear in the more immediate presence of thy Conqueror!" DEATH replied: "Thou guarded one, all I have to do with thee, is to sign thy dismissal from this stage of action, and open thy passage to immortal felicity." He said, and instantly pierced his heart with an arrow dipped in the blood of Immanuel; and as soon as the venerable man felt the arrow rankling in his bosom, in holy triumph, he cried, O DEATH! where is thy sting? and where is thy victory, O desired grave? Thanks, eternal

thanks, be to God, who hath given me, even me, the victory through my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Is this DEATH? said I: DEATH, who of late was so cruel, when he had to deal with a person of a different turn of mind. Call him no more the Monarch of terrors! Yes, I will still give him that name, for it is essential to his very nature. If at any time, to any one he be propitious and gentle, impute it not to any compassion in him, but to the blood, the precious, the atoning blood of the Redeemer: that blood, whose attractive virtue has drawn the poison, even from the King of 'Terrors; malignant to all, save those whose hearts and consciences by the divine Spirit are sprinkled therewith.

However, I could not help thinking, that there was something in the case of this good man, as remarkably to be desired, as that of the lady was dreadful; and I could then say, with Balaam, (I trust from a better spirit,) "Let me die the death of the righteous, and my latter end be like his."

DEATH, having released from the clayey tabernacle the waiting spirit of this sanctified disciple, changed himself a second time into the appearance of a dragon, whetted his sting, and put on all his formidable terrors; in which equipment he bent his course towards a magnificent palace, which stood at some distance on a delightful plain.--- With timorous heart and careful steps, I followed as near as I might with safety, and attentively watched, to see what the next execution would be. At this time there happened to be a ball or

dancing assembly in the palace; an assembly of people, from whom every serious thought was banished, and who were wholly devoted to voluptuousness and dissipation. As these people of pleasure intently pursued with jovial glee, the musical mazes of the dance, invisible DEATH stole in among them, and grinned ghastly upon them; but inattentive to the enemy's approach, they persevered in jocularities, till he cruelly pierced the hearts of two of the company, in whom the injected venom rankled, so as to prevent their enjoying a future merry meeting. I trembled with fear lest the rest of the company should be taken; but afterwards understood that DEATH, rapacious as he is, always mindeth the contents of his commission, without which he never appears on our mundane coast; but carries it along with him, wherever he goes, and never seizeth any but those whose names and places of abode are specified therein: so that he is liable to no mistake, as he is falsely charged with in the case of the two Ireneuses.

I was not a little diverted at the conduct of some people, whom I heard crying out for DEATH, seemingly in good earnest, saying, where is propitious DEATH? O that I knew where I could find him! but as soon as the terrible skeleton presented himself, they fled for refuge to the doctor's embrace. Others really amazed me; for they hunted through the field in silent pursuit of DEATH, and as soon as they beheld him, plunged themselves into his devouring jaws.

Many such instances I saw, but must at present forbear relating them, lest the length of my dream

should give occasion to people of a censorious spirit to charge me with oversleeping my time; but what I saw, filled me with uncommon concern for my fellow-creatures who were under the arrest of DEATH before they were aware; hurried from the stage of action, before they well knew themselves to be mortal. Grieved to see the thoughtless stupidity of blinded mortals, and the unretarded havoc made of them by merciless Death, I cried out, in bitterness of soul, "O that they were wise, and understood this! O that they would consider their latter end!"

As I was thus breathing forth desires after the happiness of my contemporaries, a venerable personage approached, and accosted me thus: "Young man, I perceive that the visible destruction brought upon mankind, hath filled your heart with honest concern; you mourn to them, but they will not lament; you pipe unto them but they will not dance: rather for your pains they will laugh you to scorn, and bait you under the ridiculous name of Fanatick. Mankind, prone to sensual pleasures, and enslaved to fleshly lusts, will not, cannot bear your serious admonitions: but if you please to go along with me, I will show you somewhat of the various forms of death, as it is met with by saints and sinners; which discovery, if attended with the divine blessing, may be of great advantage to you all the days of your life."

Being naturally of an inquisitive mind, I readily embraced the offered favour, gratefully thanked the gentleman, and pleased myself with the hopes of seeing much of the monster Death, with whom

I expected, ere long, in cruel conflict to encounter. But dear Sir, said I, before we depart hence, let me beg to be acquainted with the story of yonder lady, who was so rudely served by the merciless Tyrant. The lady, said he, after whom you inquire, was named Teresa, the only daughter of a wealthy gentleman and lady in the neighbourhood. She was blessed with a person peculiarly elegant and pleasing; her countenance displayed the most agreeable softness, and her snowy skin even vied with the feathers of the swan for whiteness; her shape was faultless in the eye of the most discerning, in every part finished with the most perfect symmetry.

Thus accomplished, she was taught, from her cradle, to value herself upon her beauty and gentility; and her fond and foolish parents soothed her vanity by all that their dotage could contrive: no care nor expense was thought too much, to render her education perfectly polite, and to set off the graces of her frame to the best advantage; but little or no care was taken to improve the infinitely more valuable soul.

Her taste for dress was so remarkably elegant, her manner of dancing so particularly genteel, such was her great dexterity at cards, and so singularly happy was she in devising schemes, and forming parties of pleasuse, that she became the most celebrated toast of the day. Thus she lived ravished with false pleasures, and dead to every serious and divine principle, till Death seized her unawares, and hurried her off from all her delights into a dreadful and unthought-of eternity,

where we leave her in a state forever unalterable, and go over to yonder building, to see what may be learned there.

This said, he conducted me through the spacious meadow, towards a magnificent building of the most curious architecture, erected on four rows of columns, partly of the Corinthian, and partly of the Ionic order, in one corner of the enamelled plain; which place we entered without formality, my guide leading the way. He was now pleased to take me by the hand, and lead me into a chamber, where were several persons of both sexes, attending a sick man who lay in dreadful distress on a bed of sorrow: he was, to all appearance, very near the expiring moment: every one waited for the last convulsive throe. My guide having, by some wisdom peculiar to himself, rendered us both invisible, unperceived either by him or his attendants, we went up close to his bedside. He started; he stared; and his eyes rolled most frightfully in his head, as if they had followed some terrible apparition, suddenly traversing the room: then he was seized with convulsive agonies, which distorted every one of his feeble organs. In this strange confusion of mind and awful distress of body, he vehemently struck with both hands and feet, as if environed with deadly enemies, from whom he desired an asylum of safety, and with an eye sanguine beyond conception, he looked on those who attended at his bedside, as if he would have said, "O that you could help me now in my last difficulties! Ye were the companions and assistants of my former pleasures ;

but now, alas! ye intermeddle not with my pain. The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever. O that I had been strangled in the birth, or dropped into the grave from my mother's breast, before I had begun my life of rebellion!"

I thought in my dream that a neighbouring minister came in, with a design to assist the dying man in his last extremity: he prayed for, and would have conversed with him, but all to no purpose, for the distressed delinquent continued in growing anguish, and could not endure either his prayers or conversation. The mourning relations procured what assistance could be had from the faculty, by all possible means to prevent the success of the ghostly destroyer: but, alas! his disease was beyond the power of physick to suppress. His trembling heart beat thick with horror, and found not room sufficient for fair play in his roomy chest, while the rank venom of the deadly fever shot through his bowels like a burning arrow, and drank up the streams of life: yet, still studious for his relief, they poured the physick into his tormented body, which only served to augment his pain. Ah! said I, how feeble are all our friendly efforts, when our unhappy acquaintance has to do with Death! Alas! what avails it to possess strong and brawny limbs, or square and well built shoulders, seeing a fit of common sickness debilitates the most robust! O may my glorying be founded on that which neither sickness nor Death can destroy! I was deeply affected with this melancholy spectacle: his tender wife and other dear relatives stood round his bed, bedewing it with



floods of tears; while mad with despair, he tugs eagerly for life, and in dying rage clinches what comes next to hand. O my soul! sure it is a solemn thing to die! and tremendous! to die in despair, how dreadful! Even his little children forgot to play, and learned to be serious. In a chamber adjacent to that of their dying father, they looked wishfully on each other, and gave vent to their infant sorrows. I could not stand the mournful sight, without mingling my tears with theirs. My guide, perceiving the impression which the affecting scene had made upon me, rebuked me with a want of resolution, in being so depressed before one half of the scene was unfolded; and I, sensible of my defect, submissively yielded to the reproof of my wise superiour. I thought, that, pleased with my submission, he opened a box of invaluable ointment, and therewith anointed my eyes, whereby they were so much strengthened, that I could readily see things which in themselves are altogether invisible to the unassisted natural eye. Then it was I soon perceived that those convulsive pangs, distorted features, rolling eyes, wild and distracted looks, &c. were not merely the effects of nature struggling with the growing disease, but proceeded mostly from a mental cause. A fearful avenue was opened before him, leading into a dreadful eternity! at the not-far-distant end of which avenue, he beheld the tremendous reward of all his ungodliness! this, this it was which caused such perturbation in his distracted mind; this it was which made Death so terribly dreadful to him; and this it is

which affecteth my mind, now I relate the story.

Nature, utterly reluctant to be dissolved, exerted her strongest powers, and made her utmost efforts, to preserve the union between soul and body inviolate. The alarmed soul, having so undesirable a prospect before her, shrunk down into the lowest caverns of the heart, as it were to hide herself from the researches of Death, which she saw approaching to dislodge her, and joined issue with shocked Nature, to repel the power of the fierce destroyer. But soon, very soon, enfeebled Nature, having exhausted her strength, swooned into helpless inactivity; then the frightened soul, finding herself deserted by her weak ally, seemed half persuaded to yield the debate. Then she quitted her interior lurking-place, and quaking as she passed through the lanes of life, ascended to the pale quivering lips, where she sat astonished at the direful event. I thought then of the propriety of those verses of the celebrated Dr. Watts :

“Death! ’tis a melancholy day

To those who have no God,

When the poor soul is forc’d away,

To seek her last abode.

In vain to heav’n she lifts her eyes;

But guilt, a heavy chain,

Still drags her downward from the skies,

To darkness, fire, and pain.”

Dread amazement seized her when she beheld lurking in the chamber a train of ghastly furies waiting to carry her thence. Precipitately back she

fled, resumed her possession of the interior regions, roused up the residue of Nature, fled to every avenue, and wildly shrieked for help; but all in vain her unequal resistance, for Death, like a staunch murderer, stood firm to his purpose, and closely pursued her through all the lanes of life, till he drove her out of the confines of mortality: at last the fatal moment came, vanquished Nature laid down her arms, the weary heart forbode to throb, and Death displayed the trophies of victory all around!

Death having broke through all the redoubts of desolated Nature, the dismayed ghost, now forced forth from her wonted dwelling, remained in a defenceless condition, exposed to the insults of merciless fiends, destitute of an asylum. Unhappy spectre! as soon as she arrived at the pale portal of the lifeless lips, she began to seek for a place of refuge: she looked up towards heaven, but dreadful was the prospect, for she beheld an incensed God loosing his engines, and beginning to play his flaming indignation upon her! To shun this inevitable evil, she looked downward, but equally terrible was her prospect there: with consummate horror she beheld the yawning jaws of intolerable hell extended wide to receive her! There being now no flying from the environing evils, the swift messenger of destruction seized, shouldered, and bore her away to appear before the judgment-seat of injured and incensed justice, where she receives the fearful, the irrevocable sentence, "Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" But oh! no

tongue can express, no heart can conceive, her struggles and shriekings, when she first felt the tormenting touch of the intolerable talons of hell! her lamentations ascended even to the relentless throne of God.

I thought in my dream, that by this time, I was almost dead with surprise and fear; but my benevolent guide imparted to me a cordial, in my esteem infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of the Indies, by which I was much refreshed, and after some time I addressed him thus:

Oh! Sir, what have I heard! what have I seen! Surely this man must have been some vile, notoriously wicked, and uncommon sinner, which makes his latter end so terrible.

To which the venerable gentleman replied: You may be assured, young man, that the Lord's judgments are just, and that he condemns only in righteousness; and if this man had not been a sinner, his final sentence had not been such as you have seen and heard. That he was a great sinner, is certain; but that he was greater than others, I will not affirm; as there is too much reason to believe, that there are thousands in the world as wicked as he, who, if boundless mercy prevent not, will meet with the same condemnation with him.

This man, whose fate you so much deplore, was named Contumacio: a person ever addicted to rebellion: when young, he had the advantage of a religious education, which was no small aggravation of his future sins, as moral instructions were thereby early impressed on his mind. From

hence he was constrained, however reluctant, to have some sense of what is in itself either morally good or morally evil; and was often subjected to the sting of an uneasy conscience, especially after any gross overbreaking in sin: those pangs of mind extorted from him many promises and strong resolutions of amendment, and often-times drove him on his knees in the closet, as well as to an attendance on publick worship frequently on the sabbath-day.

You will not think it strange, I suppose, if I tell you, that by his attendance on the word preached, together with his converse with religious people, he attained a good degree of speculative knowledge, both of the law and Gospel. This made him look on himself as a converted person, notwithstanding he possessed not one desire after the heart-cleansing power of religion; but, amidst all his pretensions, allowed himself in secret sin, and pretty often his sins were obvious enough to beholders. As his religion was far from uniform, at some seasons neglecting the word preached, he associated himself with those whom he called good companions, and enjoyed the pleasures which flow from drinking and gaming; and so long as conscience was mild, he laughed at the weakness and narrow spiritedness of those who could not relish the pleasures which he enjoyed in his indulged liberties.

Thus it was with poor Contumacio, for the most part, when health and prosperity stretched their easy wings over his dwelling; for he seldom dealt in religion but in cases of adversity, which,

though not often, he was sometimes visited with, as you shall hear.

It was the Lord's pleasure to visit him on a certain time with a violent fit of sickness, attended with many symptoms of imminent danger, inso-much that he thought himself on the very brink of eternity. The dreadful apprehensions of approaching DEATH impressed his mind with much sorrow for sin, and gave birth to some hopes, especially with the less intelligent of the godly, that the work might be real and saving, and that his affliction might prove a sanctified means of his conversion. But, alas! my friend, all their hopes were blasted ere they well began to blossom; for as his disease abated of its violence, his convictions abated proportionally, till quite recovered from his bodily complaint, and then he was likewise relieved from the fever in his conscience.

There is an old saying, "Afflictions never fail to make a man either better or worse," exactly verified in this unhappy person; for he increased daily in wickedness to that degree, that he laughed at every thing sacred; for, one warning after another being disregarded, it pleased the Lord at last to leave him, to work iniquity with greediness. Thus it was that perverse Contumacio was hurried forward by his carnal acquaintance, and his own vicious inclinations, from one sin to another, till he hath brought himself to what you have now beheld.

This awful account of the unhappy Contumacio greatly affected me; and as I was deeply musing on what I had heard and seen, my venerable guide thus addressed me: "Come, now let us take a

view of the friends of the deceased." And now my attention was wholly engrossed with what passed among them, the most of whom were bathed with tears.

God rest his soul! says one, he was as good a natured man as ever lived.—Ay, that he was, says a second; and as good a husband as any in the world, and minded that which was good too—though, to be sure, poor man, he was not without his failings; but the best have their failings as well as he. Very true says a third; God help us, we are frail creatures: Poor man! it is well for him that he has got safe out of this troublesome world: it is better for them that are dead than for us that are alive: to be sure, he is the happiest of us all! Thus they reasoned, and occasionally threw in consultations in regard to the order of the funeral.

I turned to my guide, with amazement on my countenance, and stared him full in the face; on which he stopped me short, before I had time to speak, and thus it was that he addressed me:

These people have no notion at all of sin being punished after death; but whatever course of life a person has led while here on earth, they take his admission into heaven, when he dies, as certain. Hell might never have been made as a place of punishment, for any notion which they have of it. If you, or any other person, were to tell these people, that their departed friend had taken up his abode in those dismal, unfathomable depths, where the worm of conscience dieth not, and where the fire of unspeakable torment cannot be quenched; they would look on you as an uncharitable and hard-

hearted wretch, unfit for the society of mankind. After what you have heard and seen, you will, no doubt, think it strange that the minister who shall perform the funeral rites, should commit the body of this man under the name and character of brother, to the dust, in a sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection with the just, notwithstanding he is forever separated from them; and yet I can tell you, that such are the ecclesiastical establishments of some nations, that was not the minister thus to bury him, it might cost him no less than degradation from his sacred office.\*

\*I have often thought it a very great hardship upon conscientious ministers of the church of England, that by the office for burying of the dead, they are tied to use the very same form over the greatest of saints and the vilest of sinners, which must be a heavy burden to an honest, intelligent mind. The form is admirably adapted to the burial of a saint, but in the highest degree preposterously false and absurd, when used in the interment of a wicked man, who dies impenitent and in his sins.

“For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed.”—This is true of the departed saint; but with what propriety can it be said of a wicked man, that he is a brother to the faithful? Is the death of such a man in mercy, in great mercy? Hath God, indeed, taken the soul of the wicked sinner to himself, instead of denouncing upon him the sentence exhibited in the words: “Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire?” &c. Is this a taking of the soul to himself in great mercy, as expressed in the ritual?

“We therefore commit his body to the ground—in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

How can this hope of resurrection to eternal life, be sure and certain, seeing the wicked shall certainly be raised to everlasting punishment, and shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God? It would be well, if some expedient was found for easing the minds of the conscientious part of the clergy, either by accommodating the rites to the death of a sin-



But, my beloved friend, may it please you to inform me, whether any reason may be assigned why this man, although wicked, should be so troubled at his death? for I have somewhere read, that the wicked have no bands in their death, and are not troubled as other men. To which he replied, Yes, young man, you have so read, if you have read your Bible; but you must know that poor Contumacio was thoroughly awakened to a sense of his wrath, on account of his sins, and they appeared to him worse than so many dreary ghosts, or hideous spectres, which made him, as you saw, so terribly alarmed when the invincible skeleton approached, and presented the point of his envenomed shaft. A world, ten thousand worlds, would he have given, could he for them, have been told how to evade the fatal thrust. But the stroke not to be evaded, he was obliged to sustain; but, oh! may you never know such a latter end!

His great disorder of mind, was partly owing to his being possessed of a larger degree of moral knowledge than some of his neighbours; so that very many of his sins were committed against the light of his own conscience, which made them the more dreadful unto him. But, the chief reason is, God doth sometimes alarm the conscience of a departing sinner, that he may manifest his judgments for the convincing of some, and leaving of others without excuse.

ner as well as that of a saint, or leaving the minister at liberty to use or not use this form, as his discretion might dictate, from his knowledge of the party deceased.

If you please, I would have you observe yonder woman, who sits pensive at the other end of the room; perhaps her conversion is one end which the Lord purposed by his judgments manifested in this unhappy man: and let me tell you, Novitio, I am of opinion, that she will never forget this awful providence while she herself is continued in being. Believe me, Jehovah's ways are in the deep waters, and by far more intricate than the paths of the whirlwind. The great, the sovereign Householder, hath an indisputable right, if he sees meet, to burn his wooden vessels, that with their ashes he may brighten his vessels of gold and silver. Now you have seen this man, and his end; come along with me and another scene shall be unfolded.

## PART III.

I thought in my dream, that according to his directions, I followed my guide through divers turnings in this stately mansion, till we arrived at an apartment, where was an old gentleman laid on a couch, dictating to an attorney, who sat by him, writing his last will and testament. He signed, sealed, and delivered the deed; and then with the greatest vivacity proceeded to relate the various virtues of his life, seemingly extremely pleased with the recapitulation.

He willed his children to follow his example; and the better to encourage them to such an imitation, he told them, that it was but a small sum of money, which he and their mother possessed at the first entrance on the marriage-state; and how, by their diligence and frugality, they had saved so and so, mentioning the legacies which he had bequeathed in his will; adding, that if they were diligent and frugal, they might also proportionably increase that which, he blessed God, he had procured for them. He added farther: "My dear children, I am very ill, and doubt I cannot recover: the doctor gives me but little hope; but it is what we must all come to; and you are witnesses of my conduct, ever since you were capable of discerning between right and wrong. I have been just in all my dealings; never imposed on any man; and now, God help me, I am dying, none

that ever I dealt with, can say to me, Thou didst me wrong ; or thou hast cheated me in this or that. This gives me great satisfaction in my present case. I thank God, I can now say, that I never swore an oath in my days, but have often been angry with that wicked practice in others. I never was drunk, but always detested that beastly and wasteful sin ; nor, as I remember, did I ever tell a lie ; but have always minded my duty to God, attended at church and sacrament duty ; and if ever I sinned at any time, I was careful to pray for mercy, was sorry for it, and confessed to God, who is merciful, and will, I hope, pardon the frailties to which we are all subject. If at any time I sinned, it was not with a wicked design, for I thank God, I have always had a good heart, and meant well in what I did ; and it were a great sin to disbelieve in the mercy of God. I hope that, seeing I have always believed in Christ, been diligent in providing for my family, have carefully husbanded what I got by my business, and have been mindful of my duty to God, I have but little reason to fear but it will be well with me ; and now, as in all probability I cannot recover, I have settled every thing, I hope, to your satisfaction, as well as to my own, and I can die in peace.”——

Thus it was that he instructed his children in his latest hours ! and some of them confirmed all that he said, by applauding the truth of every sentence. However, I thought all along, that I discerned a secret joy among the young people ; notwithstanding, for decency’s sake, they assumed several of the symptoms of grief, and was confirmed in my

opinion, by overhearing the eldest son, when the father said, "In all probability, I cannot recover," to whisper secretly to himself, "I hope you cannot :'" and when the old man said he had settled every thing to his children's satisfaction, the son whispered again, "Ay, if you would make quick work of dying!" I then thought how foolish it is in those parents who snatch at every opportunity of amassing wealth for their children, seeing that thereby they are so far from gaining their love and esteem, that they become impatient for their death, in order to be possessed of their substance.

In the mean-while, the visitants of the old gentleman comforted him against the fear of death, by putting him often in mind of his life so well spent; which will, said they, no doubt, make you a happy man, as soon as you are delivered from this afflicted body.

Notwithstanding I was greatly surprised at the ingratitude of young Phylargyrus, in wishing the death of his father, I could not help being well pleased with the disposition of the old gentleman's affairs; and turning to my guide, with satisfaction visible on my countenance, I said:

Ah, sir! what a happiness is it to be rich in good works! O with what pleasure may this man die, when he looks back, and takes a view of a life spent to such great advantage! How vast is the difference between this and the other man's estate! Contumacio went distracted to hell; but Avaro will, doubtless, go joyfully to heaven the next moment after his dissolution.

To which my guide replied, I see, Novitio, you

are too prone to judge according to outward appearance; not considering that appearance and reality are, very often, two different things: but wait with patience only a little while, and you shall see an end of Avaro, with all his happiness which you so much admire.

By this time, I thought that old Avaro declined apace, and ever-watchful Death, who attended on his bed, imposed a fatal weight on his labouring heart; a dark mist beclouded his heavy eyes, and a cold dew rested clammy on his forehead, so that every pulse was expected to beat a finis; but as there yet remained a few sands in the mortal end of his glass, he recovered a little, and, after some time he said: I thought I should have spoken no more, but I have yet time to bid you farewell; farewell, my dear children! I must pay this debt of nature; but my peace is made with God, and I die comfortable! This said, his head declined, his eyes became fixed, and all the symptoms of immediate death were upon him.

It was now that my venerable guide bid me to mind well who were in the chamber with us; on which, lending a close attention, I beheld several ghastly furies, in all the deformities of reprobation, silently lurking round the bed of the sick man; but none of them offered to come near to disturb his peace. The good Veratio, my benevolent guide, perceiving that the discovery had struck me with horror, wished me not to be afraid; for, said he, they will all be very quiet till the old man's departure, and even then they will discover themselves to none but him.

You will easily believe, that I now began to change my opinion of Avaro, having seen who were his silent attendants. The moment of separation come, the beguiled soul took a kind farewell of the body, and came forth from the interior regions, smiling with hopes of the divine reward; and as soon as she ascended to the lifeless lips, she looked around to espy her tutelar angel; but dreadful was her astonishment, when she perceived that there was no guardian near, to bear her thence in safety, but a train of relentless furies, waiting to carry her to their dark abode! With infinite terour she turned about, and strove to regain her former possessions; but now, alas! the gates of mortality were shut, and the body refused to admit its former tenant. The sly seducers, as so many merciless tigers, leaped upon and seized her in the midst of her horrou and distraction. O what heart can conceive, what pen can describe, the dreary distraction of the dismayed spectre, when she found herself shackled by those cruel tormentors! A faint description thereof would make the stoutest heart to tremble, and the ruddiest countenance to gather blackness. The sly seducers, who attended him incognito, during life, remained quiet as possible till the deceived ghost was safely dislodged, and then they assumed the devil in all his infernal forms and tyranny; seized fettered, and bore her away. notwithstanding she resisted their fury with inexpressible struggles. O my soul, how dreadful must the disappointment of that man be at death, who in his life time feeds upon the transient hope of a hypocrite, and builds

his expectance of future happiness on a sandy foundation ! Instead of being caressed in the bosom of everlasting love, he is enfolded in the arms of eternal despair ! instead of partaking of the ineffable joys of the righteous at death, he is precipitately plunged into the gulf of never-ending anguish !

It was now I began to understand the meaning of such sayings as these : "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish : they look for peace ; but behold evil cometh," &c.

Astonished at the event, I turned hastily to my guide, and asked him how it came to pass, that a man of so many good works, should at last become a pray to devouring flames. Sir, said I, how is it ? Can it possibly be consistent with the goodness and equity of God ? To which, the worthy gentleman meekly replied :

I tell you, Novitio, you must not, from what you have seen, infer that the ways of the Lord are unequal, and that he disposeth of his creatures unjustly. For all the good works of which Avaro boasted so much, and depended upon for his acceptance with God, were good only in show ; they proceeded not from a principle of living faith ; and you are informed by the word of divine truth, that whatever is not of faith, is sin. Nor had the blind Avaro the least regard to the glory of God in all or any of them ; but they were performed with a view to answer selfish ends : therefore, when they came to be examined by the eye of impartial justice, they were all accounted abominable deeds ; for no act is acceptable to God, unless it springs from



a living faith in Christ, and a principle of love to God. He had, indeed, some slight acquaintance with the external forms of religion, but was wholly a stranger to its heart-cleansing and world-overcoming power; but however clean he had made the outside of the cup and platter, being inwardly full of ungodliness and error, he was unmeet for, and consequently, could not possess a dwelling in the Holy of holies. Avaro, while alive, was one of those deceived people who esteem gain to be godliness: his whole life was spent to the end of getting; and being successful therein, he valued himself far above others, fondly alledging, that all his increase was owing to his own industry: and if at any time, he thought of Divine Providence, he imagined that his worldly prosperity was an evidence of his enjoying the favour of the Almighty. As to his religion, he seldom omitted going to church twice on the Lord's-day; and since he was old, and unfit for business, once almost every day, by which he thought he merited greatly at the hand of God; and was the more confirmed in his opinion, inasmuch as some of his neighbours did not attend on public worship once in a month.

When at any time he gave a small part of his substance to feed the hungry or clothe the naked, it was generally to wipe away the score of sin from his conscience, or to prevent his being thought a covetous person; for this was a scandal which he could not endure, but looked upon his carefulness as an excellent virtue. Yea, so ignorant was he of the pure and spiritual law of God, that he expected to be rewarded for the gathering together

fortunes for his children. Some legacies he hath, indeed, left in his will for charitable uses ; for he was one of those griping misers who have no heart to do a generous action while their substance may be called their own, and who, to make an atonement for their having withheld more than is meet, bequeath sums of money for the use of publick edifices at their death. Strange infatuation ! to think the defrauding of the legal heir can be acceptable to the infinitely holy God ; or in any wise stamp a reputation upon the character of a man. While Avaro lived, there was none in the neighbourhood more successful than him ; but however he succeeded in his former enterprises, he is woefully disappointed in death ; for now the die is cast, his loss is irrecoverable, and his afflictions are beyond a remedy ! Believe me, young man, continued Veratio, all disappointments, losses, and crosses, which can possibly happen in life, are infinitely rather to be chosen, than that which the successful Pharisee meets with at his death.

I was exceedingly shocked at the fearful deception of this worldling,--rich in life, but poor in death ! and, in my confusion of mind, I breathed forth some such desire as this : “ Lord, deliver me from the subtle insinuating love of the world, and stupid ignorance of thy holy ways ! ” My guide interrupting me, said : a suitable prayer ; for the love of money is the root of all evil, springing from, and ever attended with ignorance of the holy God ; ingenuous and wise was that heart that could suggest such a prayer as “ Lord, give me neither poverty nor riches, ” &c. Which of your acquaint-

ance, Novitio, think you, can heartily express such a prayer?

Avaro being stretched out a lifeless, clayey corpse, Veratio led me away to a third mansion in this stately fabrick where another distressing scene was unfolded. The unhappy Securus, a young man of about twenty-one years of age, was the possessor here; but his term, alas! appeared to be near an end, being almost spent in a consumption: yet, unhappy youth, he could not bear to be told that he was a dying man. His relations and friends did what they could to prevent him having any thoughts of Death and a future state, by basely and sinfully flattering him with hopes of recovery, notwithstanding they evidently saw, that without a miracle being wrought, his death was inevitable.

One told him, that she knew a certain person, who had been as bad; if not worse, than Securus was then; but was now happily recovered, and was as well as ever. Another advised to send for Mr. Medicus, a distant physician, who, she said, had performed wonders in curing consumptions. A third persuaded him that he looked better than formerly, and was likely to recover; but not one of them was faithful enough to put him in mind of approaching Death, and a never-ending eternity, which he was just ready to launch into, lest they should disturb the tranquillity of his mind.

Grieved in soul to hear them flatter the blinded wretch with hopes of life, even when they saw that his death was to be expected every moment, I was about to have spoken, but my guide preven-

ted me, by saying, that his friends would look on me as bad as a murderer, if I should disturb his conscience by asking him any pertinent questions relating to a future state. Is this a display of parental affection and brotherly friendship? said I.-- Miserable relations! Unprofitable and pernicious friends, whose very friendship is the most barbarous cruelty! Is it not enough that he hath lived a life of unremitted rebellion against God, but you must study to get him out of the world, insensible of it? Wretched ministers of false comfort, are ye all! O my God, let me ever be preserved from the fatal influence of soothing flattery! This said, my guide addressed me in the following manner: This is young Securus, a thoughtless youth, accustomed to put the evil day afar from him, minding only the present time; for if it happened, as sometimes it did, that the thoughts of Death encroached on his mind, he lulled his conscience to quietness, by promising to repent of his sins, and amend his ways hereafter, when he was old, and had enjoyed the pleasures of life; little thinking that he was to be cut off in the very bloom of youth. Securus was one of those who pretended to be zealously affected for the church, but never came near its assemblies; and even now in his latest hours, he has not the least thought of Death and eternity; but is angry with his physician, because he will prescribe no more medicines for him. Still he hopes to prolong his life, notwithstanding his lungs are so far spent that he can hardly utter one half of a contracted sentence. In all appearance, he will never think of Death and

judgment, heaven and hell, joy and pain, till the flaming torments, playing around him, rouse his sleeping soul. Then, if not before, he will begin to think of eternity. At last he will be convinced, that the torments of hell are insupportable, and of never-ending duration, though he disregarded every threatening thereof denounced in the sacred oracles.

Vain Securus, while in health and prosperity, laughed at the timidity of those who had any dread of offending a holy and terrible God; and accounted religion to be nothing else but whining hypocrisy, but, ere long, he will feel, to his sorrow, that the wrath of a sin-avenging God is, indeed something to be afraid of, and that religion is real, and not chimerical.

In health, he accounted the lives of the religious to be madness, and their latter end without honour. So he lived; and now his insolence in basely contemning the ways and people of the Lord, hath issued in that stupefaction of mind, which ere long, will terminate in intolerable anguish: then he will be fully convinced, that his supposed fools are the only wise ones on the face of the earth, and that their latter end is more honourable than that of all men besides.

This awful proof of degeneracy touched me so sensibly, that, as I thought, I uttered such a lamentation as this:

O Sin! monstrous beyond all productions! thou most abominable of every evil! Thou hast bereaved us of our native knowledgè possessed in our creation-state, and diffused darkness through

the whole understanding! Thou hast changed our ancient love into present hatred; and all our former holiness gives place to sinful insensibility! Can a man stand at the entrance of the grave, and there concert the schemes of earthly pleasure? Having his feet on the threshold of the gates of perdition, can he yet believe himself in the land of security and rest? Who could ever conceive, without ocular demonstration, that such blindness overspreads the mind of a rational being, as should cause him to look on his body as tenable, even when in the chilling embraces of desolating Death? But so it is, through thy prevalency, thou most loathsome of every nature! By thee destruction overwhelms the human race, thou fertile source of innumerable evils! O let me forever admire the discriminating grace of the great Three in One, who, by the special influences of the divine Spirit, hath realized sin to me in all its hateful deformities and dreadful consequences; hath made my once stupified and benumbed conscience feel a gentle touch of his fatherly anger on its account; hath given me a detestation of sin; and hath, according to his own purpose and grace, been pleased to lead me for pardon and acceptance unto that precious blood, enriched with all the fulness of indwelling Godhead! O my soul, bless thou the Lord for a sense of sin; for though it is painful, it is also salutary. Let them not be accounted for thy companions, who deem a sense of sin to be superfluous in religion.

It was now that I thought my guide, Veratio, interrupted me, just as the sin-hardened Securus

departed this life ; and said, 'thoughtless he lived, and thoughtless he died ; but now he is thoughtful enough ! Believe me, Novitio, he hath already thought more of hell, sin, and rebellion, than ever he did in all his life. Look you, Novitio, to yonder dark lake of fire and brimstone, where he is already plunged, undergoing the unknown tortures of the second death. And now he hath a never-ending eternity before him to think of what is past, and what is future. Unhappy is he who is thoughtless in life, and unprovided for in death, like the wretched Scurus ! A pompous funeral is, indeed, designed him ; but, alas ! what pleasure can lifeless clay or a tormented ghost take in funeral pomp, or the crocodile tears of the mercenary mourner ? But let us leave his relicks to endure that honour designed to be imposed upon them, and let you and I see what farther discoveries we can make.

O, Sir, said I, what dreadful scenes you unfold ! Is this, Veratio, the portraiture of unmasked death ? Do all my fellow-creatures die thus miserable ? And is there no such thing as comfortable Death to be seen ? O, Sir, my very flesh shudders at these awful discoveries.

My guide replied : Know, young man, that sorrow is antecedent to joy, grief before consolation, darkness before light, and humility before honour. Shrink not back, when the cup of bitterness kisseth your lips, seeing it is preparative to the cup of salvation. But if Novitio trembles to see such horrible appearances of Death, only think what they must feel, who endure them ! However com-

passionate your timorous disposition, I shall show you but one instance more of the death of the ungodly ; after which, I shall endeavour to recompense your pain by more pleasant discoveries. I mean I shall discover unto you some of the godly, with their latter end. In the meanwhile, let us attend the disconsolate Letitia, in her departing agonies.

This said, he led me away to a magnificent apartment, decorated with all the productions of art.-- In this apartment, brilliant as it was, we saw a lady whom all the riches of the East could not make happy ; she lay on a bed of down, surrounded with hangings of damask, it is true, but found no more rest than if she had lain on a flinty rock : she was under the power of an inveterate malady, and had been so for several years ; but greatly added thereunto by murmuring at, and repining under the afflictive dispensation. She seemed to me to be about thirty-five years of age, and had been possessed of a goodly measure of external beauty, before it was blasted by this inveterate evil ; so that while a maiden, she was what we commonly call a genteel lady ; and whatever qualifications Teresa could boast of, were all to be found in the youthful Letitia. In her affliction, which was, indeed, grievous, being a cancer in the breast, she greatly envied the happiness of her visitors, purely because they enjoyed health, the loss of which she inconsolably lamented ; and instead of receiving the visits of her friends with that grateful civility which might have been expected from a person of her rank and education, reduced to such distress.



ing circumstances, she was used to give it to them in some such terms as these :

“ It is well for you : you can go abroad at your pleasure, and visit your friends, and with them partake of the sweetness of life. You may make much of it now, for you have all the genteel amusements to yourselves. As for me, I know not what evil I have committed more than others, that I should be imprisoned in this solitary place, to endure such racking pains as I do. I hear of many who have lived far more liberal than ever I did, who still continue to enjoy all the pleasures which either town or country can afford ; but I must lie here on this irksome bed, and nobody knows when I shall be able to go abroad, so much as to take an airing, or to see one friend or another. I employ the best physician in the country ; but how it is, I know not, he can cure others, but all his prescriptions seem to be lost on me.”

It was thus she entertained her friends, and thus she rendered herself disagreeable to all that came near her.

A godly minister in the neighbourhood occasionally visited her, though his company was never very desirable, his conversation being by far too serious for a lady of her disposition of mind. Her elevated station, and the known precariousness of her temper, long deterred him from dealing so faithfully with her as he desired ; but at last he greatly offended her, by telling her that she ought to consider herself as a dying woman, who must soon give an account of all her actions to a just and impartial God, whose sentence cannot

be evaded. He faithfully told her, that she must be regenerated by the Spirit of God, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ, before she had any reason to expect that her death would be comfortable; he told her, that unless she was renewed by the Holy Ghost, no regard would be paid at the great tribunal to her elevated station in life; for only those in every nation who fear God, and work righteousness, shall be saved; for the Lord God, said he, is no respecter of persons.

By this seasonable advice and salutary instruction, the good Philantropos incurred her ladyship's displeasure so far, that she could never after gratefully receive a visit from him, but was always sullen and out of temper in his company.

The venerable Veratio turned himself to me, and thus he said: Letitia was a fine gentlewoman, a descendant of a right honourable and illustrious family, genteel and handsome in the graces of her person, and by her birth entitled to an ample fortune. Her noble parents, with all imaginable tenderness, from her earliest days, indulged her to the last degree; they never cared to cross her inclinations, nor to restrain her humour, however extravagant; by which means she became imperious and haughty, a perfect humotrist in her temper. From her youth upwards, she was inured to all the vanities of the town; the park, the play-house and the opera, were as familiar to her as her bed-chamber; and well she knew how to act her part in every polite entertainment. Her beauty, rank, and fortune, brought a noble earl lawfully to her bed about the age of twenty-one. Being commen-

ved wife, she abated nothing of the pleasures to which she had devoted herself, but added very considerably thereunto, by receiving and returning many useless and unprofitable visits, until the fatal time on which she was seized by this malignant evil, which is, indeed, the forerunner of her death; and then she was out of temper with every body who came near her. Husband, children, and servants, all shared in her anger. Letitia's beauty was esteemed more than eastern pearls: she vainly imagined that the diamond lost its brilliance, when her eye deigned to glance upon it; the damask rose its liveliness, when compared to her lively cheek, and the coral she supposed to yield to her all its perfections, and own itself outdone, when her mellifluous and pleasant lips were unmasked: but poignant pain and frequent sickness, greatly impairing her adored beauty, surprisingly added to her affliction. So long as her strength would admit, she was wont to try her features in the looking-glass oftener than once a day; but how the faithful mirror was charged with falsehood, and bore the weight of her indignation, is not worth your while to hear, nor mine to relate.

O, Sir, said I, methinks that on all our looking-glasses, this motto, "Memento Mori," ought to be written, and a Death's head fixed on the top of every frame; for even beauties, who delight to gaze upon looking-glasses, meet with no reprieve from Death.

That son of Melpomene, who so judiciously hath drawn the portraiture of *the Grave*, represents beauty as not one whit more grateful to the

worms than deformity, and as certainly their feast. If you please, Sir, I will recite the passage to you as it is not very long:

Beauty ! thou pretty plaything ! dear deceit !  
 That steals so softly o'er the stripling heart,  
 And gives it a new pulse unknown before !  
 The grave discredits thee : thy charms expung'd,  
 Thy roses faded, and thy lillies soil'd  
 What hast thou now to boast of ? Will thy lovers  
 Flock round thee now to gaze and do thee homage ?  
 Methinks I see thee with thy head low laid,  
 Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheek,  
 The high-fed worms in lazy volumes roll'd,  
 Riot unscar'd. For this was all thy caution !  
 For this thy painful labours at the glass  
 T' improve these charms, and keep them in repair,  
 For which the spoiler thanks thee not ! Foul feeder !  
 Coarse fare, and carrion, please thee full as well,  
 And leave as keen a relish on the sense.

BLAIR.

According to the doctrine of this solemn bard, sir, every timet hatt he beautiful lady tries her graces in the glass, she should reflect how the worms will one day burrow in her cheeks, and her eyes become the nauseous habitation of loathsome insects; that she will then be on a level with the meanest beggar who ranges the streets of the metropolis, and yield no higher relish, though fed with turtle, to the worms, than the miscreant who keeps life in his body by mouldy bread, and the garbage of the kitchen, scarcely procured by lowly cringes, and the most fervent entreaties.

Ay, said Veratio, Mr. Blair may sing in that solemn strain, till he break the strings of his lyre, before the beaux and belles of our day are likely to mind what he says; for to this day it hath been

at the peril of any servant or attendant whatsoever, to tell Letitia that her looks are altered; nor hath her physician and surgeon ever dared to tell her that her disease is incurable. Full of pain indeed is the unhappy lady; but she languishes out her time in murmuring and repining at the sad dispensation, and envying the happiness of others.

My guide finishing here, I thought in my dream, that her physician entered the chamber, and feeling the lady's pulse, she asked him if he thought there were any hopes of her recovery. The doctor replied, "I am afraid, madam, there is not." Then she fell into a fit of visible discontent, and sinfully uttered many things against the ways of the Almighty; and continued to the last charging him with inequality:

The time of her departure being come, I saw terrible sights: her life being spent in gait and madness, her latter end was without honour, for no sooner was the unhappy soul drove forth from the once-delicate body, now the vanquished prey of relentless DEATH, than she was seized by the cruel messengers of destruction, and forcibly dragged to appear at the equitable bar of a pride-resisting God; from whence, as a just reward of her unholy life, she was sent, bound hand and foot, to be "cast into utter darkness, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched;" there she wept, she wailed, and gnashed her teeth. There she found many of her former companions: but, alas! their wonted mirth was departed, and horrid despair sat lowering on every countenance; while the convulsive bowels of ever-dismal hell rolled her

impetuous billows upon them, and every single sense drank in the unutterable torment.

The miserable end of Letitia thus surveyed, I cried out, O God! who hath hardened himself against thee, and hath prospered! If a self-adoring Pharaoh say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" thou hast a Red Sea, in which he and his hosts shall be drowned. If a haughty Nebuchadnezar say in his heart, "This is great Babylon, which I have built for the house of my kingdom, and for the glory of my majesty," the heart of a beast shall be given to him, and he shall eat grass like the oxen in the field. And if a God forgetting lady should spend her life in the pursuit of transitory pleasures, the sequel shall prove that she has been dead to God, while she lived to herself.

Then turning to my guide, I said, I perceive, sir, that DEATH is no respecter of persons, knoweth no distinctions, can neither be bribed nor moved by entreaty, much less can be resisted by power. No, no, replied Veratio, DEATH cannot be entreated, is an utter enemy to mercy, and a perfect stranger to distinctions: the majestick prince and the rustick peasant, the noble earl and his servile groom, the amiable lady and the scorched cook-maid, are equally the same to his indiscriminate shaft; all distinctions vanish in the grave, that common receptacle of rich and poor, noble and ignoble, beauteous and unseemly, old and young, the lordly prelate and famished curate,—all ranks and degrees of men meet here on a common level; in this respect, one end happeneth to all men. People of distinction too often desire no

other heaven besides the vain and fantastick pleasures of life, little considering, that, ere long, they must bid adieu to sublunary enjoyments, and the most high God hath fixed it as an invariable maxim, that the desire after, must precede the enjoyment of heaven; hence, no desire after the future enjoyment of God being possessed in this life, it is not rationally to be expected, that they can enter into the celestial felicity at their death.

These earthly gods, continued Veratio, are much dissatisfied, if they receive not a great degree of homage from their inferiours in life; but, believe me, nothing is more common than for them at death to stand trembling under the force of self-conviction, before the judgment-seat of the King of kings, who hath declared himself to be no respecter of persons.

Then, said I, woe is me for my fellow-creatures! into what destruction has sin involved them! How few, alas! are they who know the things which make their eternal peace, before they are forever hid from their eyes! Unhappy, most emphatically unhappy, indeed, are they, whose only heaven consists of glittering dust, and whose bliss is composed of the empty honours and wretched pleasures of this seducing and bewitching world. Let honours in the highest degree be imposed upon me, and let me enjoy all that men call happiness,--what will it profit, if my soul must be banished, forever banished, from the amiable presence of my God? Can these, Veratio, ever be deemed an ample compensation for the loss of God, in his divine excellencies and glorious subsistencies? A

lean, an empty heaven! soul, let thy delights forever be attracted by the refined, the sublime pleasures of our holy religion! and thou, my heart, look down with indifference upon all those fineries which worldlings so much admire!



## PART IV.

HAVING thus spoken, I thought my guide, the good Veratio, led me from this to another apartment in the opposite side of the stately building; and as we entered the apartment, I heard a person with a mournful tone of voice, thus express himself: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage; a few days and full of sorrow." What is the meaning of this? said I; this is a strange kind of saying. To which he replied, "You will understand this better hereafter." When we entered the chamber, I saw a grave man of advanced years, who seemed to be in great distress both of body and mind; and thus he addressed some of his friends, who, it seems, had been endeavouring to comfort and strengthen him in the prospect of dissolution.

O my friends, you little know what a sinner I have been! let sinners of the highest rank be thought of, and I assure you I am worse than all; yea, I am the very chief of sinners, the vilest and most unworthy creature in the world, Oh! how justly doth the Lord afflict me now! he leaves me not comfortless in my last trials without dreadful provocations; such provocations as makes my very heart bleed to think of them: justly, alas! am I left to the scourge of an evil conscience, and made an instance of the terrible displeasure of an offended God! O what innumerable mercies have

I enjoyed at his hand! but such hath been the depravity of my nature, the sinfulness and rebellion of my life, that I have grossly abused and trampled them all under my feet; and what can I now expect, but to be forever banished from the presence of him whose goodness I have so grossly abused, and against whom I have most ungratefully sinned. I tremble to think of enduring his displeasure; but, if I must endure it, I know it is my desert, and in my condemnation I will confess him righteous; for I, only I, have destroyed myself.

Here he was stopped by excessive grief, which vented itself in a flood of tears, and one of his friends, who sat by him, thus replied: My dear friend, I am exceedingly surprised to hear you lay such heavy accusations against yourself. You charge yourself with the worst and basest of crimes, whereas all we, your friends and acquaintances, who have been witnesses of your conduct, are fully convinced, that ever since you made a profession of religion, your whole conversation hath been unblameable, and becoming true godliness.

To which the sick man replied: O my friend! it is that--it is that which grieves me now! Oh! how it pains me to think, that people, who could only see my outside appearance, took me to be somewhat, when, alas! my own heart all along told me that I was nothing. Even now, the discovery of the pride and hypocrisy of my heart is a burden intolerable. I would fain have been sincere, it is true, and I often thought that I strove for it; but, O wretched and miserable creature that I am! I never could attain it. Sometimes,

formerly, I flattered myself that I was one of the Lord's people; but now the disguise is taken off, and I am convinced that I have been, and still am, an enemy to all real righteousness, an utter stranger to the heart-purifying religion of the holy Jesus.

Oh! it grieves me to think how I have imposed upon the church of Christ, where I have been only an intruder, a vile tare growing up among the Lord's wheat, a filthy goat among the innocent sheep of the Redeemer! but now it is my greatest fear that I shall be forever separated from both him and them.

Here he was again stopped by the anguish of his spirit, and, after a few minutes, another friend of his, in a spiritual manner, replied: My dear brother, this is only a temptation of the enemy; and such, I trust, ere long you will find it to be. It hath pleased the Lord to withdraw from you for a moment, and for holy ends, to leave you to the buffetings of Satan; but, believe me, believe God himself, he will return with mercy and salvation, and with everlasting loving-kindness he will gather you. What though your sins are great, the merit of the Redeemer's sacrifice is infinitely greater; what though the cry of them reach even to the heavens, his precious atonement surmounts them all; yea, although they are of a scarlet crimson stain, the blood of Jesus, the Son of God, shall wash you, and make you white as wool, or the whiter snow. Satan is, indeed, permitted, as the accuser of the brethren, to load your conscience with heavy accusations; but, yet a very little

while, and the base accuser shall be cast down ; Satan shall be trampled forever under your victorious feet.

Let my friend consider the many great and precious promises which are made to the "poor in spirit, the weary and heavy laden, the captive, the broken-hearted sinner, the hungry and thirsting soul, the mourner for sin," &c. these are the names and characters of the Redeemer's people, and all these meet together in my brother ; which is to us, though not to yourself, an evident token of your adoption, by grace, into the elect family. Had he not loved you, he would never have put his own seal upon you ; had he not chosen you to salvation, through the sanctification of "the Spirit, you could never thus have groaned under the depravity of your nature ; and having loved you, it is with an everlasting love, a love which never can alter, but is sure to endure to the end. How can my brother sink, while the arm of everlasting love is underneath him ? or perish, while the eternal God is his refuge ? O my friend ! think of the above characters of the redeemed, and try if you find not some of them belonging to yourself.

He ceased here, and the sick man, with a trembling voice, replied : I thank you, my dear sir, in the most grateful manner, for your tender care for my welfare ; but, alas ! I can see nothing in me that looks in the least like to the character of the Redeemer's people. I see no promise in the Bible that belongs to me ; for a word of promise would be a comforting stay to my sinful soul, now in my last distress. It is true, that many times in

my life, the trouble of my mind hath been alleviated by such considerations as you propose; but now I am a dying man, ready to land upon a dark eternity, and I cannot draw rational conclusions from such considerations. O eternity! eternity! nothing can make me look into eternity with pleasure, or render Death in any wise comfortable, but a sensible manifestation of my interest in the death and resurrection of Christ, the Spirit itself bearing witness with my own spirit, that I belong to, and am born of God. The pain of dying is nothing, when compared with the pangs of soul I feel in looking forward to a dreadful futurity. I may now say, in the language of the Psalmist, "Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of his water-spouts; I sink in deep waters, wherein there is no standing," I know, my friends you would have me trust in God, and apply the promises to myself; and gladly I would, but I find that I can as soon remove mountains, and cast them into the sea, as trust and believe in God with a faith of appropriation. He hideth himself from me, and how shall I discern him? O that I knew where I might find him! I would come, with Job, even to his seat, and spread my complaint before him; but, alas! he covereth himself with darkness, and will not admit of my approaches. I press forward, but cannot find him; I look back to past experience, but can see no track of his Spirit's work; I turn me to the right hand and left, but can perceive nothing at all of him. On the contrary, I am environed with devils, and my own sins, which are more dreadful to me than all the infernal tribes; these only do separate between me and the God of salvation.

I thought that here the poor man's words were a third time interrupted with the agitation of his grief, and he shed an abundance of tears; his friends prayed with and for him; fervent and much distressed they seemed to be in prayer; every one imitating the conduct of the wrestling Patriarch, when at Peniel. They likewise reasoned with him concerning the immutability of divine love, the infinite value of the blood of Christ, the certainty of the promise of the covenant the wise ends which God might have in withdrawing from him in his calamity, the assurance which the scripture gives us of the Holy Spirit finishing his work in the souls of his people, and the confirmed malice of the implacable tempter. They likewise expressed their hope that the Lord would yet appear for him in a way of consolation, before he would take him down into the dark valley of the shadow of death; but if it should be otherwise, they were assured of his landing safe on the shore of felicity; but all their endeavours seemed to be fruitless, for he still persisted in his belief that the righteous God had, in strict justice, cast him off, as unworthy a place among his chosen ones.

I now turned to my guide with disdain in my countenance, and addressed him: Ah! Sir, what a wretched deceiver this man must have been in his lifetime, that he is thus given up to the scourge of an evil conscience at his death! O! it is a fearful thing thus to play the hypocrite with God!

To which my guide, with some warmth replied; I told you before, Novitio, that you must not always judge of a man's estate according to his

outward appearance. This man, whom you so rashly censure as a deceitful hypocrite, is the good Humilius. So far from being what you apprehend, he is one of the precious sons of Zion, a faithful disciple of the Redeemer, and a special favourite of Jehovah, whose ways are in the deepest waters, and whose judgments are unsearchable. Few have equalled this venerable saint for fervour of spirit and sanctity of life, and few have drunk so deeply of the heavenly Spirit of the immaculate Jesus, notwithstanding he is thus tried like silver in the furnace. While health and vigour attended Humilius, he was blessed with a greater than ordinary discovery of his own sinfulness both in the root and in the fruit; and he was one of the very few who daily grieve under the sense of the pollutions of their depraved hearts, and consequently under a sense of the defilement and imperfections of their best services. This discovery greatly tended to lessen his comfort and joy, so that he seldom had those elevations of spirit with which some are favoured; but, at the same time, it had a happy tendency to make him extremely careful of all his proceedings. His conscience was affected with the slightest touch of sin, and smote him even for an unsanctified thought. He retained such a sense of sin, that he was always low and mean in his own esteem; saying, with some ancient worthies, "So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee; I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and have not the understanding of a man." Contrary to the practice of many professors, he accounted himself the unworthiest

of all, utterly unworthy of a place in the church of Jesus; on the other hand, his fellow Christians looked on him as a man of exemplary piety, holy, and unrebukeable in his conversation in the church and in the world; patient in tribulation, fervent and constant in prayer, desiring not his own, but the glory of God, not his own, so much as the good of the Redeemer's people.

This unexpected account of Humilius greatly amazed me, and made me more solicitous to know what might be the event.

Therefore I addressed my guide in the following manner: Venerable sir, I readily acknowledge my error, and humbly beg your pardon for my foolish censure; and I pray you would signify your forgiveness by informing me, whether it is possible for such, as you have described Humilius, to be cast off by the Almighty, and at last to perish. To which I thought Veratio replied: No, Novitio, it cannot possibly be, that such a one can perish, for there are none but the regenerated who can answer the description I have given of the good Humilius; and any may know, that none are regenerated but those who are the objects of God's special love; that all those he loves with an everlasting love, he loves to the end: therefore, however dark he may be in regard to union with, and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him in the love of God, it is not possible that he can perish. These are dark paths, Novitio, through which Humilius is led: nevertheless, they are sure paths, and lead directly to the kingdom of light; and let me tell you, he is led even now by the



Fountain of Light himself, notwithstanding he seems to be blind to any sense of his leader's presence. His patience under his affliction, his resignation to the divine will with respect to bodily pain, his abhorrence of evil on account of sin, and his justifying the ways of God, together with his earnest desire of forgiveness and acceptance, are so many evidences of his interest in the love of God, though at present he can see none of them.

Sir, said I, permit me to ask you another question, for I am born to be troublesome. Can there be any reasons assigned, why the Lord should suffer some of his dearest saints to fall into such desertion and distress in their latest hours?

Yes, Novitio, said he, some reasons may be assigned, why it should sometimes be so; but want of love in God to their persons, want of tenderness in the Redeemer, can never be justly thought to be the reasons for it; but God hath holy ends to answer by every part of his procedure, and no doubt, by this dispensation also. I suppose that one end which he may propose by the troubles of good Humilius, may be to stir up his professing people to doubt their diligence in the use of all appointed means, thereby to make their calling and election sure to themselves; that, when they arrive at their latest hours, they may be exempted from those spiritual conflicts with which they see others exercised.

Ah! but, sir, said I, how is it that the Lord maketh choice of those who are most eminent in holiness, to endure those afflictions which are designed for the edification and improvement of their surviving brethren?

Veratio replied, There is no necessity, that I know of, Novitio, for you to ask a reason for the proceedings of the Almighty; nevertheless, the difficulty here vanisheth, when it is considered, that for the Most High to choose for such purposes, persons whose conduct hath been less guarded, would not answer the end designed. We naturally expect that professors who are unguarded in their conduct, and remiss in the known duties of religion, will find hard work of it on a death-bed, which will be no less troublesome to them, than if they lay upon pointed flints; so that, although the party himself may be at last saved, it is through fiery temptations and grievous afflictions: but when Christian people behold a person of the most circumspect and conscientious conversation, springing from principles of the most eminent piety, mourning after an absent God, and lamenting his sins, which all the world besides himself are strangers to, it naturally tends to stir up each to self-examination, and to consider his own ways. The learned Fleming relates a story of a northern worthy who had been in divers cases favoured with an extraordinary discovery of the mind and will of God, who, when he came to a death-bed, called his friends to him, and thus addressed them: "O my friends! I find it a great matter to be a real Christian, and unrebukeable before God: I declare to you, that such hath been my support for the space of ten years past, that God hath not been out of my thoughts as long at once as one might go to the cross and come again, (which might be done in ten minutes,) unless I have been asleep, or about

business; and, after all, I assure you, that I am even now at the very brink of despair."

Another end which God may have in view, perhaps, may be to remove the carnal confidence which his own people are too prone to have, in the grace which they have already received. In some frames, instead of studying to be strong in the grace that is in Christ, they are strong in that which is implanted in themselves: vainly imagining, that they can overcome the severest trial in the strength thereof. With an ancient professor, when he stood on a place slippery enough, they say, "My mountain stands strong; I shall never be moved:" not considering that the Christian's conquest depends not on the grace which he hath already received, but on fresh supplies communicated in the time of need, from Him, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness shall dwell. All fulness dwelling in Jesus, naturally supposes that there is nothing but emptiness in the creature, and that, therefore, the sublime exercise of Christian faith consists in a constant reliance upon God in Christ, for mercy to pardon every sin, and for grace to help in every time of necessity.

Now when Christian people behold the greatest of saints labouring in the dark, under the severest buffetings and sharpest conflicts of soul, it naturally tends to make them suspect their supposed strength, and to exercise themselves in an habitual reliance upon God. And seeing their need of fresh supplies of grace, how naturally are they led, by such dispensations, to the inexhaustable Fountain of all fulness, for strength proportioned to their

days of difficulty and trial; and especially for large supplies in their death-bed trials, because very often they are found to be the greatest; and well it is that the Lord is pleased by any means to teach his people to live upon himself.

But come, Novitio, and I will discover to you the immediate cause of the sorrow of good Humilius.

This said, the venerable Veratio anointed my eyes with his precious eye-salve, and in an instant I discerned a deformed fiend crouching close by the side of Humilius, and whispering him in the ear; and at every sigh which the good man made, through the pressure of his grief, the malicious fury smiled a most ghastly grin. But giving a close attention to this evidence-darkener, I perceived a chain harder than adamant round his middle, the end of which was secure in the hand of a majestick person, who shone brighter by far than the sun in his strength; by which I saw, that although it may please the Almighty sometimes to permit Satan to disturb the minds of his chosen ones, he never suffers him to destroy them; and that he can go no farther than permitted by the divine Redeemer.

Learn from hence, Novitio, said Veratio to me, that the same enemy who allures to sin, while in health and prosperity, will, if permitted, tempt to despair in a state of sickness and adversity. And be you, yea, let every Christian be thankful, that Satan is ever kept under a suitable restraint by the power of Almighty God, otherwise feeble mortals must of necessity sink under his great superiority.

Here my guide ceased; and, as I thought, the good Humilius, for the last time, opened his mouth and said: Ever since I knew any thing of religion, flying to Christ has been my last resource. I am now dreadfully oppressed with the weight of my sins, but whither shall I fly for help, but to the mercy of that God against whom I have sinned? He only hath the words of eternal life. There is none in the heavens above, none upon the earth beneath, that can help me but him; as it has been in my lifetime, so it is now; this is my last resource: I die, if I trust not in him; I can but die, if I trust in him: therefore I will prostrate my soul at the foot of his throne, and there will I sue for mercy. If I perish, I perish! and if I should, as I deserve, be spurned from his presence, it shall be relying on his own blood and righteousness, for there is salvation in none other.

Having uttered these words with the dying rattle in his throat, his speech failed, to the great grief of his godly acquaintance; some of whom said: Alas! lest this should be the means of turning the lame out of the way. One thing I beheld, pleased me mightily; which was this: the moment that good Humilius ceased to speak, the majestic person of whom I spoke, who shone so gloriously, gave the chain, wherewith the fury was bound, a severe twitch, and obliged him to leave the good man to his rest: which so enraged the squalid infernal, that he growled most horribly, and in anguish gnawed the adamant chain; then disappeared, and I saw him no more.

In the mean while, my benevolent guide, by

some supernatural means, opened my ears that I could hear, and in some measure understand the language of spirits; which I no sooner perceived, than with all diligence I attended to what now passed with the good Humilius; in whose concerns I found myself by this time deeply interested. As I listened, I heard the Almighty, who but a little before seemed to stand upon Mount Sinai, surrounded with clouds of darkness and horrible tempests, now speak from Mount Zion, in a still, small voice and said to the speechless man: "I have loved thee with an everlasting and immutable love; therefore I have drawn thee by dark paths to myself; yea, I have caused thee to pass under the rod, and have brought thee into the bond of the covenant. The way which I led thee, thou knowest not; but I have made crooked places straight before thee, and rough places smooth; thy wayfare is now accomplished, and I have bruised Satan forever under thy feet."

The dying man no sooner felt the blessed effects of the well-known voice of God, than in an ecstasy of joy, he mentally replied: My Lord and my God! Now, Death, do thy worst! Come as soon as thou wilt, thou awful skeleton, for now thou art welcome! Now my Lord is returned with loving-kindness, I can with pleasure enter thy cold embrace, and repose my flesh in thy gloomy mansions. Hasten thy pace, thou tardy executioner; cut short thy work, thou friendly enemy! I long to enjoy the beatific vision of him who loved me to the death, and washed me in his blood, enriched with all the fullness of indwelling divinity.

I saw in my dream, that guardian angels descended from heaven in blazing squadrons, to attend the dismissal of this sanctified soul, and to guard her passage to the celestial world. As the good Humilius ceased to breathe, the attending angels clapped their wings for joy, that one more of the chosen race had passed through the glory birth,—that one more of the elect charge was safely gathered home; with holy fervour they saluted the glorious spirit, and bid her welcome into the undisturbed rest of their splendid society. She thankfully received their pure caresses, and struck with wonder and astonishment at unspeakable grace, she instantly mixed her melodious voice with those warbling choiristers, her companions, who sung the most delightful song, to which every ear attended. I thought I could discern the glorious notes of sweet deliverance from the lips of the newly-departed soul, in a key more exalted than the rest. O with what pleasure did I listen to the solemn song of one who so very lately was languishing in deep distress!

O Veratio! cried I, what blinded creatures are we mortals! The glories of heaven blaze all around us, and yet we perceive not in the least their illustrious splendour.

Having sung the noble anthem to distinguishing love and unspeakable grace, they stretched their brilliant pinions, and swift as thought shot through the vault of heaven, towards the regions of eternal felicity. As soon as they arrived in the empyrean plain, I beheld innumerable companies of the celestial hosts, in their long, their glorious, and re-

fulgent garments, with crowns of gold upon their heads, and triumphant palms in their hands, come in bright procession to the golden gates of the New Jerusalem, to congratulate the soul on her safe arrival in the glory-world, and in triumph to conduct her up to the throne of God. As they passed along through the streets of Paradise, which were all paved with diamonds and topazes, the departed Humilius was often saluted by his former companions in warfare, who greatly rejoiced that his pilgrimage was finished, and the time of his coronation arrived. In their bright procession from the golden gates of the holy city up to the jasper throne, shouts of loud joy, and peals of rapturous triumph, burst from each tongue, and made all the celestial arches ring in concert with their elevated voices.

I thought I saw the blessed, the ever-adorable Jesus descend, from the midst of the throne, and meeting Humilius, embraced him with tender affection; he also called upon the excellent Theophilus, (under whose ministry, Humilius, it seems, had been savingly converted,) and let him know, that now another diamond must be added to his crown, as another of the children whom God had given to his faithful ministry, was happily arrived. Then he took Humilius by the hand, led him up to the all-glorious throne, and to Him who sat in the most majestic state thereon, he said: "Most holy Father! behold this darling object of thy love and choice, this subject of redemption is safely arrived in thy more immediate and most joyous presence; being fully prepared for it by the divine



influence of the Holy Ghost. Let him now possess the mansions which hath so long been prepared for him, and enjoy the rest into which he was predestinated,"

Then He who sat on the throne, thus bespoke the soul: "Come, my beloved one, receive the joys which I have prepared for thee, and the glory unto which I have appointed thee; for I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and by my special care of thee, I have drawn thee to my glory."

Then the records of eternity were all laid open before him; and now being blessed with the beatifick vision, he could read every line therein which related to his own state, either in time or in eternity. And oh, how great was the wonder of the soul! how inflamed was her gratitude, when she found every circumstance attending her pilgrimage, was unalterably fixed in the decrees of God, which are so dark and difficult unto us in the church below! With holy amazement she beheld that the whole chain of providential events flowed from and centered in the love of God to her in the person of Christ. Silent no longer could she sit; but her wonder broke forth in rapturous songs of ceaseless praises, in concert with all the redeemed hosts, who, now, in the fervour of unutterable love, struck the golden harp, and sung responsive to the trembling wires.

Having followed Humilius thus far, Veratio spoke to me, and lo! the vision was withdrawn; but left some impressions on my mind, which, I trust, will never be erased. Being at last capable of a little reflection, after my astonishment was

abated, I could not help thinking of the infinite difference between those who die in the Lord, and those who die in their sins;—the latter being precipitately plunged into the fearful abyss of dark and everburning hell, where the worm dieth not; whereas the former are immediately transported, on angelick wings, from a land of sin and many sorrows, into the more immediate presence and ineffable light of the ever-blessed Three, to partake of all the joys of the undivided One. Then I said, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

## PART V.

As I was ruminating on these things, I thought that my guide called me away, saying, We may yet see DEATH attended with very different circumstances; and, although I thought myself by the last scene fully repaid for all the terrour I had undergone at the beginning of my acquaintance with Veratio, I was inspired with the most eager desire to have farther discoveries of sanctified DEATH. I followed him with the greatest eagerness out of this chamber, wherein I had viewed such an agreeable scene, into another apartment adjacent to it, and there he showed me a happy disciple, who, with great composure of mind, was laid on a sick bed, under the pressure of heavy affliction. Calm and serene in the midst of tempestuous trouble; in the midst of trying sorrow, his patience stood unmoved, even as the stately oak lifts up its lofty head, despite the western tempests; or as the stable rock, amidst the furious surges, endures the wrathful discharge, without the least emotion. Rent with racking pain, and oppressed with deathly sickness, he patiently, though with a trembling voice, said, Good is the Lord's will concerning me! the cup that my heavenly Father hath mingled for me, shall I not patiently drink it? I thought, in my dream, that he was thus addressed by one of his friends: Sir, I would have you repose yourself a little, for your afflictions are very heavy; and, not-

withstanding your spirit is submissive, your flesh must needs be weak. To which he replied: My afflictions are all known to the Lord; yea, it is my God who hath fixed the degree of them; and seeing the Almighty is pleased to do it, I dare not, I cannot complain, for I am well assured, that he can do nothing wrong. Were it not right, he could not do it, omnipotent as he is. My afflictions, indeed, make this clay tabernacle to totter; but are lighter than nothing, when put in the balance with my sins. I well know they might be infinitely greater, and yet my God be a just God. But mercy and tender compassion guide his hand, even when he smites, and his bowels yearn, when he mingles a bitter cup for any of his people. I am fully persuaded, that he will lay no more upon me himself, nor suffer others to lay any more upon me, than he will support me under, for the Lord is very pitiful and full of mercy, even to me, though I deserve nothing at his hand, but to be left to lie down in sorrow; I am, therefore, altogether easy about the measure of my afflictions.

It was here he stopped; and one of his friends rejoined: My dear sir, how great is the blessing to be thus filled with comfort in the time of your sickness! To which the sick man replied: Indeed, my friend, my comforts are far from being so high as you imagine: on the contrary, I assure you, that sensible enjoyment runs very low with me at present. But this is the ground of all my confidence—“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” he is the rock of my soul; and however my comforts flow, I account them not my

Christ. Since it pleased the Lord to visit me with this affliction, which I think is drawing near to a period, I have had many struggles with my own unbelieving heart, and many conflicts with Satan, in regard to my interest in the love of Jesus. But, glory to the Almighty name, the enemy seems to be withdrawn, my anchor is within the veil, and my hope is fixed in Immanuel. I myself am a poor helpless worm, and my faith is very tottering; but the rock of my salvation, the object of my faith, can never be shaken. With Him there is no variableness, nor so much as the least shadow of a change; I may, therefore, boldly trust in him, and calmly wait the issue of his providence.

After all, continued he, I must confess, that I have often been indulged with sensible manifestations of divine love, when, to my own apprehension, I stood less in need of them than at present. But, O, let me not attempt to correct the proceedings of unerring wisdom! The Lord's ways are the best, and I desire to submit to them; he hath graciously promised that he will never leave nor forsake me, and I account him faithful who has promised. I bless him for his word. This is the hold into which I flee for shelter in the dark and stormy day. I would not for all the world, be without an interest in the above precious promise, for I live not now by sense, but by faith, and this affliction hath found a good deal of work for the little faith, I possess. Believe me, my friends, I have often been obliged, in times of darkness and difficulty, to live upon the word of grace; and it has, upon the whole, been spirit and life to my

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soul. I never knew the promise to fail; but the word on which he hath caused me to hope, hath always been confirmed. I have ever found the Almighty to be as good as his word, ever better than my fears suggested, and infinitely more gracious than my deserts.

The sick man being spent with so much speaking, I thought that he was obliged to be silent for a small space, to recover himself. But such was his zeal for the welfare of his friends, that as soon as possible he spake as follows:

My dear brethren, in all appearance, I am now near, very near, my last hour! and I tell you, and beg that you will regard it as the words of a dying man, that the cross of Christ is of excellent use in mortifying us to creature-objects. Cross dispensations of Providence, bodily afflictions, and the temptations of Satan, are such excellent corrosives, that by the direction and influence of God the Spirit, they prove the destruction of sin in our members. For my own part I declare to you all, that I have learned more of God by afflictions, than by all the sermons that I have ever heard preached.

It was now that Veratio whispered thus to me: I well believe, Novitio, what this good man says of his afflictions; for as the fervent fire is to the golden ore, and water to the sullied linen, so are afflictions in the hand of the Spirit of God, to those who are exercised with them. Parricide is lawful in no case else but this: here it is a righteous thing that afflictions, which are the legitimate offspring of sin, should first curb the power, and at last destroy the being of their accursed parent. And for

our comfort, let us know that afflictions themselves cannot survive the sin which they instrumentally destroy.

In the meanwhile, the dying man continued and said, My dear friends, despise not the chastening of the Lord; resist not affliction with a foolish pagan bravery; neither murmur, repine, nor faint, when you are rebuked by him; for he chastiseth not in anger, neither does he rebuke in hot displeasure. If you are the objects of divine love, you must expect the application of the rod; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you are the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, you must expect in this life to bear the cross, for it is always antecedent to the crown. Without afflictions you, do not, you cannot bear the image of your heavenly Jesus, for he was afflicted, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. They greatly mistake, who hope for Christ here, without afflictions along with him. Our passover is never to be eaten in this world, without bitter herbs; therefore, that religion which is unconnected with the cross, is not the religion of Christ, but of the world. Be you assured, my friends, that the way in which no cross is found, must needs be the broad and downward way; for the cross of Christ is the right, the only pathway to the kingdom; and those who despise and reject the cross, will find themselves at death, deprived of the crown. Here he stopped again, his strength being exhausted; and his silent friends stood with a mournful pleasure around his bed.

After some time one of them made so free as to ask him, whether he would choose to live or die, on supposition that the Almighty would grant his desire. To which, being a little refreshed, he replied: Indeed, my friend, I cannot tell you; for so far as I know my own heart, which hath all along been a mystery to me, I neither desire life nor death; for me to live, is Christ, and for me to die, is eternal gain. I know that the Almighty hath numbered my days, and my months are with him; he hath fixed the limits both of my time and of my habitation, so that I cannot pass over them: yea, he hath, by an immutable decree, appointed the very moment and means of my dissolution. Why, then, should I anxiously think, or care any thing at all about the matter? His purposes are forever the same, and the thoughts of his heart unto all generations. His council shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. If I am appointed to death, as I think I am, I trust he will glorify himself in my death; and if it should be that I am appointed unto life, he hath wisdom and power sufficient to glorify himself even by my living. I yield myself wholly to his disposal; for the Judge of all the earth can never do wrong: living and dying, my God be glorified in me!

Here he ceased; and his friend, with visible sympathy, rejoined: Happy, my dear brother, is it for you, to be thus indulged with strength from on high, in the time of your great distress. But tell me, my friend, if your strength will permit, do tell me, if you have no desire to live and see your wife and children comfortably provided for? Me-



thinks it is a desirable thing, to see our children educated in a religious manner, and settled agreeably in the world. These things often lie with a distressing weight upon my mind, and are ties which strongly bind me down to earth, and from which I sincerely desire to be delivered.

The sick man replied: My dear friend, I must confess to you, that, next to the welfare of the Redeemer's church, my wife and children are dear to me;\* and if any thing could now prevail with me to desire a longer sojournment in this valley of sorrows, it would be the welfare of my dear children, and dearer wife, for they have always been dear to me, ever since I enjoyed them. Consulting their welfare, had formerly been attended with great anxiety; but now I see, that in my over-carefulness, I was far from being submissive to the sovereign pleasure of an all-disposing God; and, as far as lay within my power, was for wresting the

\*These words of Stabilius, "Next to the welfare of the Redeemer's church, my wife and children are dear to me," are very remarkable, and ought to be regarded. That he loved his wife and children, is evident from what he says both in this place and elsewhere; but however fervent his affection for them might be, it gave place to the love he bore to the Redeemer's church. This evidences the true spirit of Christianity in him, and serves as much to fix his character, as the exalted exercises of his faith, being expressive of the very spirit of that text, Matt. x. 37, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." If this be regarded as a rule, it will fix a lasting stigma upon those professors who are so full of care for themselves and families, that they have neither leisure nor inclination to care for the church of God. These are like withered limbs in the common body; they neither impart nor receive nourishment; neither are their death-beds likely to be honoured, as that of the good Stabilius.

dispensations of Providence out of his unerring hand. Had I done what I could to promote their welfare, and left the issue to the Almighty, I had done well ; but, alas ! I could not be easy, unless I evidently saw the issue answer my desire. But, blessed forever be that God who turneth our hearts as he does the rivers of water, at present all anxiety appears to be gone, and my wife and children are no burden at all to my mind ; for I know that the God whom I serve will convert the stones of the wall into bread, before he will suffer the seed of the righteous to famish.\*

Settling my children in the world, appeared a very desirable thing, before I came to a death-bed, but now I am taught that their settling in the world does not, in the least, depend on my being present with them ; for the determination of Jehovah hath long since divinely gone forth by a firm and an unalterable decree, in which all their circumstances, great and minute, are infallibly settled by the unerring wisdom of Him who worketh all things after no other counsel but that of his own will. The life of the sparrow and the dinner of the raven, are provided for in his grand decree ; yea, the very hairs of our heads are numbered, coloured, and disposed by unerring wisdom : much more are the bounds of our habitations and the extent of our possessions the result of divine appointment. If the Lord is pleased to make my children poor, (as

\*An illustrious instance of divine regard to the seed of the righteous, and care for the widow and fatherless, we have in the provision made for the numerous family of a worthy minister, the Rev. Mr. BURFORD, lately deceased.

it is his prerogative to make poor,) how shall my presence with them be able to make them rich? or if his sov'reign bounty shall be pleased to exalt and make them rich, what circumstances so penicious, as to prevent the execution of his design? Holy and revered is his name; he disposeth of all creatures and things as his wisdom doth direct. By his determination kings reign, and princes decree justice. Races and battles are under his direction; yea, the very turning up of the lot is determined by Jehovah; much more the station and circumstances of his people, and their children. Why then should I desire to interfere in the matter of settling them to the disquieting of my own mind? for God both can and will bring his purposes to pass, without my instrumentality, if he is pleased to take me to himself! Their education in religious principles, hath been by far the most tender point with me, well knowing the influence which a godly education often hath upon the conduct of youth; but this also I am enabled to leave with the Lord: not from any indifferency about them, so as to be careless about their welfare in time or eternity; but I have ever been so sensible of my deficiency, in regard to paternal duty, that I often fear my children have been more injured by my imperfections, than profited by my precepts and instructions. Besides, I am fully persuaded, that God will be at no loss for an instrument, when he is about to teach them the knowledge of himself.

Be assured, my friends, that children are not brought one hour sooner to the knowledge of God, on account of their parent's lives being preserved;

but many have, by their parents' death, been brought into circumstances by which the Lord hath been pleased to lead them into the knowledge of themselves, and the secret of his own immutable love to their persons. Therefore I commit my tender offspring to the protection and grace of him who has deigned to become the father of the fatherless, and who hath said to me in my condition: "Leave your fatherless and your widows to me." I trust his word; and believe, of all guardians, he is the most disinterested. My dear Honora, my beloved spouse, always hath been dear to me, ever since it pleased the Lord, by his holy ordinance, to make us one; but although she is dear to me, as that we seemed to possess but one soul, I can with pleasure leave her a few days behind me in this world, notwithstanding it is, and she finds it to be, a world of sin and sorrow. I know that she is an elect vessel, a daughter of faithful Abraham, and an heiress according to the promise; and as such, she is under Divine protection, and cannot miscarry. Fear not, my dear Honora, fear not the safety of your passage through life. I know that this world is a land of snares and a hell of pain and sorrow, when compared with the haven of pure felicity to which we are bound. It is and, my dear, you know it to be, a land inhabited by implacable enemies to the heaven-born pilgrims who are passing through it; but let not this discourage my Honora, for "He who saved your soul from Death, will also prevent your feet from falling. He who hath loved you with an everlasting love, will bear you through all difficulties and

dangers, and make you more than conqueror." It is your God, my love--your Husband and Friend, who reigns supreme over all creation, who holds the reins of government in his own Almighty hand, and thereby curbeth the enemies of his people at pleasure; so that the most potent of them cannot lift up his heel against the child of God, without his divine permission. He never grants a permission to any of them, without a proper limitation: "Hitherto thou mayest come," is the permission; "but thou shalt go no farther," is the restraint; even as Satan obtained leave to destroy every thing which belonged to pious Job, but was prohibited touching his life. Thus it is, that the feeblest of the Redeemer's flock dwell secure from real danger, beneath the covert of divine protection.

My dear Honora, our great Lord is a husband to the widow; He is a wise director, a rich provider, a powerful protector, and as such He is yours, yours in the strongest obligations, yours in time and to all eternity. The confidence I have in these things, makes me willingly resign the wife of my bosom, and my tender offspring, to the will of that beneficent Being, who hath a sovereign right to dispose of me and mine, as He shall see most for his own glory.

My dear friends and fellow-travellers, beware of immoderate care; for you may greatly injure, but never can you thereby profit your children at all. Think not that their settlement in the world depends either less or more upon you; for when you have cared your last for them, the Sovereign Ruler will dispose of them just as he sees meet,

without so much as once consulting you in the matter. Ah, my dear brethren! when you lie as I now do, upon a death-bed, you will see, that all immoderate carefulness springeth immediately from ignorance of, and enmity against the ways of a holy God. Alas! how many Christian people are wofully perplexed with fruitless care all the days of their lives, and are thereby prevented of that usefulness which they might otherwise be of to the church of Christ! Believe me, the best thing you can do for your children, is solemnly and seriously to dedicate them unto God, leaving them and all their concerns at his disposal. If you do this in good earnest, by an habitual act, both you and they will reap the advantage of it; yours will be the peace, and theirs will be the profit. Remember what young Samuel got by his early dedication.

He ceased here, his strength being exhausted; and, after some time, one of his friends thus addressed him: Dear sir, I cannot persuade myself but a mind thus stayed in the Lord, must be filled with the most joyous transport.

To which the good man replied: My mind is composed, and calmly fixed on the unalterable word of an everlasting God; my peace is settled, though my joys are far from being elevated. It is not on inward frames and feelings that my hope is stayed but on the promises of the everlasting covenant, which is in Christ, yea, and amen to every believer. Inward feelings are, indeed, extremely pleasant, but I have not dared for many years to trust them; for at best I have found them fleeting

and transitory; now enjoyed—dead anon! now like the full-blown rose my comforts have flourished—immediately stripped of all their beauty, like the winter vine! When I lived upon my frames, I was all upon extremes, either ravished on the mount of enjoyment, or gone down to do business in the deep waters. One hour I said, “My mountain stands sure; I shall never be moved;” perhaps in less than another, I supposed myself, like Peter, sinking into the bosom of a fatal billow. No solidity could I ever find in the frames and dispositions of my own heart; but I never found the promise to flee, nor the Lord to depart from the word he hath spoken. In all my trials, his immutable word hath been my stay; and on it alone will I lean, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. And thus in quietly resting on his word, he will finish the salvation of my soul.

Indeed, if the Lord should be pleased to indulge me now with the sensible comforts of his felt love, shed abroad in my heart by his Holy Spirit, it would make this lonesome valley, into which I am entering, by far more delightful, and my passage through it abundantly less thorny. But if, in his wisdom, he should see meet to withhold from me such a desirable measure of sensible manifestation, I bless him for strength to rely upon it.

My dear brethren, beware of making to yourself a Christ of the dying comforts with which your holy Redeemer is pleased occasionally to indulge you. Remember, that if his tender concern for your peace and pleasure, induce him to privilege you with the shedding abroad of his love in your

heart, the same tenderness of you will induce him to withdraw his comforts, when he sees himself supplanted, and you live upon those comforts rather than upon his person, grace, and righteousness. Remember always, that salvation, and the comforts thereof, are two very different things; the fulness of the former being often possessed, where there is but a very small degree of the latter. In my early days of grace, I was greatly wont to frame to myself notions of the love of God, according to the glimmering twilight of my own mind, and the good or evil frame I found myself to be in; but through rich grace and amazing mercy I have been taught rather to judge thereof by the written word of God, by which I have been piloted through seas of difficulty, when darker sensations have lost sight of shore. And I trust the Holy Ghost will guide me by the said written word, till in his good time he is pleased to land me on the glory-shore and bring me into the more immediate presence of the great Three in One.

This said, he remained silent for a considerable time, and the venerable Veratio turned himself to me, and thus accosted me: Now, Novitio, you behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. This is the good Stabilius, a Christian of the right kind; one who may be called a father in Israel; he can well distinguish between husk and kernel, shadow and substance, truth and error; a faithful one in the household of God. His holy soul can feed upon nothing but what is spiritual and divine; such bread, and such only, as descended from God out of heaven, is pleasant to his



taste. In his lifetime, which hath been an interrupted succession of crowding sorrows, the good Stabilius could live as well and as satisfactorily upon a word of promise, as some others could do upon five hundred a year. Thus, in his lifetime he was so happy as to live by faith in the promises, and now he is dying he is still the same. The word of the Lord is his comfort and stay. But although unbelief appears now to be banished from him, I can tell you it was not always so; for the time was, when under dark dispensations of Providence, he complained with Jacob, that all those things were making against him, though now he is better informed. Yea, whatever infidelity we can find in Job, David, or Asaph, one part or other of the life of good Stabilius hath furnished him with a sad remembrance of theirs; though, upon the whole, his faith has prevailed gloriously; and I imagine he will never more feel an impulse from unbelief.

Now, Novitio, I have a mind to unfold an amazing scene to you; such a scene as you have never before surveyed. Then he touched my eyes with an eye-salve of divine preparation; and instantly I saw what was extremely amazing. I saw a numerous troop of restless infernals beleaguering the bed of the sick man, which was well defended by a brilliant minister of heaven, divinely superb in his immaterial array. Clothed with impenetrable armour, the martial guardian waved a flaming sword, with which he kept all the furies of the pit at a proper distance; so that although

the most implacable hatred and rage glowed in every breast, they were not able to come near, to disturb the mind of Stabilius. Sometimes they tipped their tongues with falsehood, and accused him of the most abominable crimes to the guardian, who with holy contempt disregarded all their clamours. Repulsed in this, they turn their accusations into the most fervent entreaties to the angel, that he would scabbard his sword for a season, and allow them the pleasure of distracting the dying man. But the benevolent protector, firm as a rock, remained inflexible to their entreaties, and deaf to their accusations, resolving, in obedience to the will of his God, to defend his charge to the last extremity. Being thus repulsed, even hell itself became hotter within them, and irritated with fierce revenge, they rushed in fearful numbers against the heavenly sentinel. Thick as atoms in the sunbeams, their hissing arrows were shot against him and his beloved charge; but skilled in martial encounters, he received their charge, and quenched their fiery darts with his shield, with which he also covered Stabilius. With his brandished falchion, which emitted streams of fire as he waved it, he made the infernal tribe give back; but filled with indignation, and fired with revenge, they instantly rallied their broken force, and returned resolutely to the charge: and I had the pleasure of observing, that as often as they rallied, the heavenly Chieftain put them to flight. Being indulged with a view of the angelick war, I thought of an ancient saying, "The angel of the Lord encamps

round about those that fear him :”\* and, turning to my guide, I said, O sir, it was well said of that Hebrew prince, who spent his youth in rural employments, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” Ah, sir! they are well kept whom the Lord doth keep, and the man is blessed whom he thus preserveth. To which Veratio replied, Now, Novitio, you have had a sight of faithful Abdiel, so justly celebrated by the famous Milton, for his constant and firm adherence to Immanuel, even when left alone in the camp of the rebellious seraphim. There it was,

That among the faithless, faithful only he ;  
 Among innumerable false, unmoy'd,  
 Unshaken, unseduced, untterrify'd,  
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;  
 Nor number, nor example with him wrought  
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,<sup>3</sup>  
 Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd  
 Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd  
 Superiour, nor of violence fear'd ought ;  
 And with retorted scorn, his back he turn'd  
 On those proud tow'rs to swift destruction doom'd.

\*“The angel of the Lord encamps round about those that fear him.” There is a surprising beauty in these words of the Psalmist, as expressive of the highest safety which the most timorous heart can wish for. He encamps with a view to continue in this situation.—It “is around them,” rather than beside them. Beside them, would have argued great safety ; but encamping “around” implies infinitely more, because every passage is guarded, and no way left for the enemy to give the attack with advantage. Encamps around when dangers are most rife, and humanity is most inactive and off its guard. “Around those that fear him,” rather thus expressed, in condescension to our unbelieving weakness ; the believer being sometimes conscious that he fears God, when he dares not conclude that he loves him.—That no room may be left for unbelief to found its arguments upon, the potency of the illustrious protector is pointed out in his character, as the “angel of the Lord.”

Thus, Novitio, this faithful guardian nobly retreated from the tents of rebellion, and ere long returned, commissioned with the rest of the celestial hosts, to fight with the perfidious miscreants, in the quarrel of the Most High; and there he discovered at once his zeal for his God, and the prowess of his own martial arm; for when,

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Before the cloudy van,  
On the rough edge of battle ere it join'd,  
Satan with vast and haughty strides advanc'd  
Came tow'ring, arm'd in adamant and gold:  
Abdiel that sight endur'd not, where he stood  
Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds.

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But from his armed peers  
Forth stepping opposite, half way he met  
His daring foe, at this prevention more  
Incens'd, and thus securely him defy'd.

Proud, art thou met! thy hope was to have reach'd  
The height of thine aspiring unoppos'd,  
The throne of God unguarded, and his side  
Abandon'd at the terrour of thy power—  
A potent tongue:

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But thou seest  
All are not of thy train; there be who faith  
Prefer, and piety to God, though then  
To thee not visible, when I alone  
Seem'd in thy world erroneous to dissent  
From all: My sect thou seest; now learn too late  
How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.

It was thus the fervent Abdiel accosted the prince of rebels, when they met between the opposing fronts of the angelick armies, on that awful day on which all the hosts of heaven and hell were drawn forth to battle, on the till then unstained field of ether. And,

The grand foe, with scornful eye askance,  
Thus answer'd the faithful Abdiel :

————— I'll for thee, but in wish'd hour  
Of my revenge, first sought, for thou return'st  
From flight, seditious angel, to receive  
Thy merited reward, the first essay  
Of this right-hand provok'd since first that tongue  
Inspir'd with contradiction durst oppose  
A third part of the Gods, in synod met,  
Their deities to assert.

————— But well thou com'st  
Before thy fellows, ambitious to win  
From me some plume, that my success may show  
Destruction to the rest.

At first I thought that liberty and heav'n  
To heav'nly souls had been all one ; but now  
I see that most through sloth had rather serve  
Minis'tring spirits, train'd up in feast and song ;  
Such hast thou arm'd, the minstrelsy of heaven,  
Servility with freedom to contend,  
As both their deeds compar'd, this day shall prove.

To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied :  
Apostate, still thou err'st, nor end wilt find  
Of erring from the path of truth remote ;  
Unjustly thou depriv'st it with the name  
Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,  
Or nature ; God and nature bid the same,  
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
Them whom he governs. —————  
Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom ; let me serve  
In heaven God ever blest, and his divine  
Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd ;  
Yet chains in hell, not realms, expect ; mean while  
From me return'd as erst thou said'st from flight,  
This greeting on thy impious crest receive.

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,  
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell  
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,  
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield  
Such ruin intercept ; ten paces huge  
He back recoil'd ; the tenth on bended knee  
His massy spear upstay'd.

According to the matchless Milton, the faithful Abdiel first asserted the sovereign right of his God, both by word and deed; and thus he hath continued an invincible hero in the cause of his master, a willing and faithful guardian of his militant children, as you have just now seen in the conflict between him and the infernal brotherhood.

I thought in my dream that I thus replied;—I thank you most heartily, my dear, my venerable Veratio, for this discovery, so strange and surprising in itself; and I thank you most gratefully, dear sir, for this opportunity of seeing the valour of this celebrated angel. But worthy Veratio, whose delight appears to be to instruct the ignorant, I pray you deign to inform me, if it is possible that such a war may be maintained around a Christian, and the party himself, for whom the strife is, remain unacquainted with it? To which I thought he replied; You may be at no loss, Novitio, to know that the best of Christians, even fathers in the Redeemer's family, see and know only in part, therefore there may be many things of this kind transacted among the immaterial inhabitants of the spiritual world, without their knowledge. Every Christian may certainly be informed, by the volume of revelation in general, that all the angels of God are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who are appointed heirs of salvation; nevertheless, there is many offices of kindness performed by those benevolent spirits, in behalf of the saints, which them ost intelligent Christians remain utterly ignorant of, while they sojourn in this land of separation and sorrow. As we may see in

the case of good Stabilius, he perfectly knows that God is the prime efficient of all his peace and composure of mind; but he does not know that there is a martial seraph appointed by the Sovereign of heaven, as the guardian of his bed, and protector of his dying moments; nor is he in the least apprehensive that there is such a swarm of reprobate spirits so near, and so earnestly seeking the distraction of his mind.

If the militant members of the chosen church could really see their shining attendants, and understand all the ways of the Lord perfectly, they would enjoy the heavenly glories before the appointed time; but the fulness of joy and the manifest glories of the redeemed are reserved for eternity, therefore not to be expected in time. On this account, many of the Lord's works are done in the dark, and his ways are involved in thick clouds; so that poor blind mortals cannot discern them before they enjoy the light of eternity. And you yourself, Novitio, may know that the conflicts between our benevolent protectors, the guardian angels, and our enemies of the reprobate race, are not to be seen with bodily eyes, but with the more refined rays of the mind. Bodily eyes discern corporeal objects, but spiritual sight alone can discern a spirit.

I thought in my dream, that towards the dissolution of Stabilius, I beheld a squadron of armed seraphs, who were dispatched from the armies in the skies to assist Abdiel in the protection of this chosen disciple; who, as soon as arrived, and fraternal salutation passed after the angelick manner,

told him, that Jehovah, having from the throne of his holiness seen that great numbers of the enemy had assaulted him and his charge, had sent them to his assistance. Abdiel thus replied: Welcome my spotless brethren! welcome are ye now to me! for I have been vigourously attacked, and still the daring infernals are resolute; but through the strength of my God, I have preserved my charge inviolate. Come, my brethren, let us prepare for immediate action, for the enemies, though frequently repulsed, being now afresh recruited from hell, are rallying their utmost force, and soon will return intrepidly to the charge. This said, I perceived that those ever-armed seraphs each of them drew his flaming sword, fixed his shield, and planted themselves around the bed of Stabilius, every hero putting himself in a posture of defence, saying with united voice, "It is the good will of our Lord that his chosen ones should be preserved." Happy man, said I, who art thus defended! I thought in my dream, that after all this was done, the good Stabilius, as if he had received fresh vigour at the arrival of his celestial visitants, opened his mouth and most fervently expressed himself in the following manner: I know that he is God, and that he is my God. He hath guided me from my conception to this my dying day; all his judgments towards me have been mingled with mercy, and holy and revered is his name; all his mercies have been mixed less or more with judgment. I will, therefore, with the royal Hebrew, sing of mercy and of judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. A chain of well-concerted and blessed prov-



idences laid hold of me at my conception, and till now hath led me in such a manner, that all hath been for good; and now, my friends, it is with amazement I see both the ends of the chain unalterably fixed in the eternal throne. It cometh from and centereth in the Father's everlasting love to me in the person of Jesus, unworthy as I am; and O! let God, even God in the person of the Redeemer, be praised, be owned, and glorified with my last, my departing breath. Hear me, my fellow-christians, for I speak now within the immediate views of eternity, and Death even now oppresseth my very lungs: behold, "I go the way of all mankind; but I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth; and although after my skin worms destroy, as they certainly will, this body of mine, yet in the flesh, even in this flesh, now almost consumed, I shall see God; yea, I shall see him for myself, and not for another; not at a distance, but near, though my reins be consumed within me. I shall see him on that momentous and much-desired day on which I shall in my whole person be made like unto himself." These words were expressed even in the arms of Death, so that he was quite spent with speaking, and lay in a profound silence for a minute or two; then in a holy triumph, with a countenance that displayed a sense of conquest, he said: "Lord Jesus, come quickly; into thy hands I commend my spirit!" These were his last words, and a few minutes after, he quietly yielded up the ghost and slept in Jesus.

In the meanwhile Veratio addressed himself to

me as follows: This, Novitio, is Christian fortitude, distinct from the ancient pagan bravery of the Romans. If you see a Brutus, or Cassius, or even a Cato himself, outbrave the fears of Death, it is from ignorance of the real nature and state of an hereafter; but it is the clear knowledge of eternity, and of the perfections of God, which fortifies the mind of Stabilius against every painful apprehension, now he is making his exit from the stage of time, and struggling hand to hand with the quencher of the animal flame.

Mind the tender Honora; mark how she stands with a mournful pleasure by the bed of her dying partner, hers but a very few moments longer. Two things oppress her with sensible concern, and two things inspire her labouring bosom with holy joy. She is most sensible of the awful dispensation which lays her under a multiplicity of cares; and O! her dear, her much-esteemed Stabilius, the pain which he endures in his departing moments, becomes hers by sympathy. As she supports his head, and tenderly wipes the cold sweat from his brow, every sigh of his, every symptom of pain, cuts its way directly through her sympathetick heart; she dreads the parting with him, yet longs for the dissolving moment. Souls thus knit by holy matrimony, and thus made one by sympathy, feel in parting such a rending and tearing of the sensitive faculties, as neither tongue nor pen can describe. But in the midst of her sorrow, two things support the amiable Honora, namely, the consideration that these parting agonies put a period to every grief, a final period to every sorrow of

her dear, her much-valued husband. And she hopes, upon solid and scriptural grounds, that in a little time she herself will be in mercy taken to the celestial world, where she shall again receive, with unspeakable joy, the pure and spiritual caresses of her glorified husband, where they shall spend a vast and an endless eternity together, in the transporting pleasures of paradise, and mutually join in celebrating the praises of their common God and Saviour. Thus she mourns; and reason says she should; but religion teaches her to mourn as one that is not without hope.

The dissolving moment came, the watchful infernals took wing and fled, leaving the soul forever to the blessed possession of uninterrupted peace; she ascended triumphant, and, wrapt in ecstatic wonder, sat for a season on the clayey lips of her beloved mate, gazing on the splendour of the messengers of heaven, notwithstanding she herself shone more gloriously than all her attendants, who, free from envy, joyfully saluted her with, 'Peace be unto thee,' and fondly congratulated her on her safe arrival on the confines of eternity.

By this time I thought I saw an innumerable company of seraphick flames, all of them shining in the perfection of glory, who, as the former, came at the will of Immanuel, to congratulate the soul on her passage through the wilderness of tears, and the gloomy valley of the shadow of Death, and her safe arrival in Immanuel's country; and then gave her their united welcome in their resplendent society. I cannot now, ah! I cannot describe the joys of the glory-born soul, when she

first perceived herself invested with the radiance of heaven, and sensibly pressed to the fervent bosom of everlasting love, for her admiration was inexpressible. But my benevolent guide, the good Veratio, now becoming an interpreter, with no small difficulty I gathered up some few of her rapturous expressions, which, but for his assistance I could not have done; for she spoke in the celestial tongue, which is a language that I never had learned; and so imperfect is the fragment which I collected, when compared with the original, that I redden with shame, and my heart flutters with fear to expose it to view, lest I should thereby injure the subject, and eclipse the glory which I would gladly (the Lord knows) recommend to human esteem. But encouraged by the confession of incomparable Paul, "Here we see darkly, and but in part," I will venture to write it, though it is, as it were, with fear and trembling.

No sooner was the happy soul disentangled from mortality, but she was filled with the fulness of the glory of God, and in the highest elevations of transport, cried out with a voice of the most perfect melody;

"Is this the resting-place to which the weary pilgrims are brought after a moment's trouble below? Glorious rest! I have often heard, I have often longed for the possession of thee, when tossed with the tempest of life. Happy I! blessed peace! Uninterrupted joy and permanent rest! Hallelujah! Let all the empyrean hosts, let all the militant church incessantly praise in the highest strain, the eternal and bounteous Provider of

this glorious rest, in which all our labour and sorrow shall eternally cease! Is this the heaven I have so often heard preached? 'This glorious place!' O heaven! How often have I heard of thy divine excellencies, when sojourning in the world below! But now I behold thy refulgent glories without an interposing cloud, and lo! the thousandth part of thy beauties was never disclosed. Happy are thine inhabitants, thou imperial city, for the great King is in the midst of thee; his uncreated glories irradiate every corner of thy blissful streets. Blessed and unsullied mansions of the disembodied spirits of the just! Happy I, who was predestinated to the possession of this divine inheritance! Is this the Saviour whom I formerly denied? Ever, till the day of thy unspeakable grace, did I say unto thee, thou adorable Lord, I will not have thee to reign over me. And O my Lord, I am now at last blest with the immediate vision of thee, thou Sharon rose divine! Thy beauties, Lord, how amiable! O how transcendently great are thine excellent glories! Eternal and all-conquering Saviour, I am now at last ravished with thy superabundant goodness, which on earth I could scarcely with coolness admire, but now I behold thee to be all-excellent and divine! Is this the crown, the end of all my former crosses? Massy treasure! Glorious lustre! How striking is the stupendous blaze! In the world below, my eyes were dreadfully obscure; but now I behold all the excellencies of Godhead, all the radiant beams of unclouded divinity, in their fullest resplendency, shining forth in thy immaculate person,

thou adorable Jesus: Blessed thou! happy I! Blessed afflictions, which in thy all-powerful hand, thou eternal Spirit, have fitted me for those unsulliable mansions of uninterrupted felicity.

“Sin and Death, where are ye now? trampled forever beneath my victorious feet. Adorable Saviour, the conquest is thine! Ye tempting fiends, the promised time is now come that I scorn forever your envious rage. No more, ye malignant infernals, shall your cruel buffetings be able to shake the tranquillity of this ever-peaceful and glorified mind. Nor shall your spear-like tongues, ye sons of violence and deceit, evermore be able to tarnish my conduct with blame. Ye children of perfidy, ye treacherous persecutors of the gracious church, the gulf is fixed, and here you can never come a second time to perplex me with sorrow; nor shall the tumultuous rage of fiery lusts and impetuous passions evermore be able to separate between my best beloved and me.

“I am now secure within thine insurmountable walls, O thou blessed Jerusalem! Overwhelmed with the insupportable blaze of delighted divinity, here let me bask forever, though the bliss is insufferable. Already filled with the fullness of manifested and imparted love, let me drink forever at the fountain of life. Ever, forever, my God, will I praise thee; incessantly praise thee, while eternity endures. Grace and providence, providence and grace, shall fill up the measure of mine eternally-delightful song. This is my employment; this is the task prescribed by the sweet obligations of gratitude!”

Having gathered up this most imperfect fragment of what I heard, I thought that the scene was withdrawn, and the vision departed from me; and I, astonished at what I had heard and seen, turned to my guide, and in transport, said: No wonder, sir, if Balaam, who saw the visions of the Almighty, desired to die the death of the righteous, and enjoy such a latter end as theirs. No wonder, if Judas, the traitor, despaired and hanged himself, after having betrayed such a glorious Saviour as this. Ah, Veratio, my good Veratio, may I enjoy the divine favour, whatever else I may lack! May I endure all sorrow which both earth and hell can inflict, rather than miss of the glory which shall be revealed! Fall short of heaven! O! I tremble at the thought! Fall short of heaven! If I should, I should be of all creatures the most emphatically wretched and miserable. To love, to see, and not enjoy, ah, what intolerable anguish would it give! If it depended less or more on works of my performing, I could not avoid falling short; but it is of grace, all of grace, of nothing but grace, and so let grace have the glory for ever secure. Yet, O let me never deceive myself in a matter of such grand importance; but raw and inexperienced as I am, I think I have something of the same hope which the good Stabilius expressed; and O Veratio, may my latter end be like his!

## PART VI.

HERE my guide addressed me, and said: Now, Novitio, you have seen something of DEATH transformed into life, and it is glorious in your esteem; but if you will follow me, we may yet make farther discoveries relating to the departure of the sanctified. By this time my curiosity was stretched to the utmost pitch; therefore I needed but little persuasion to attend to further discoveries, seeing the departure of Humilius and Stabilius was so very agreeable, at least to myself: therefore I said to my guide—Lead, Veratio, lead wherever you will, and I will follow you.

Are you sure of that, replied Veratio; perhaps you may be mistaken: a much stronger person than Novitio appears to be, hath deserted me before now; and the strongest have found it difficult enough to adhere to me at certain times. Pardon me, sir, replied I; I meant while you unfolded such agreeable scenes; for I perceive, sir, their influence is attractive. Well, Novitio, replied he, I agree with you in that; for when you are strongly drawn, I do not doubt but you will run apace. However, at present let us attend to the matter in hand.

Accordingly he led me from this to another, but mean apartment; and as we entered, he said, Now, Novitio, prepare yourself for seeing the wondrous works of the Almighty. I admired what miracle I was now going to behold; but ere long I beheld



a miracle of grace; a poor woman and three small children were the humble inhabitants of this small hut. As I learned from my guide, the poor, but tender mother, whose name was Fidelia, had been confined to her bed by a deathly disorder, for the space of six weeks or upwards; and by this time she seemed almost conquered by the fatal enemy to nature, though she still retained the perfect use of her reason, and still was capable of speaking to her visitants. At the time of our going into her mean apartment, some few of her friendly acquaintances, some of them meanly, others of them better attired, were come to visit her, desirous to perform the best offices of Christian friendship, expecting that her departure from earth was at hand. One of them, who stood by her bed-side, spoke to her thus: "My dear friend Fidelia, I see your body is very low, and in all appearance the hour of your departure is approaching near; but if strength will permit, I should be glad to know how it is with your soul: for I have sometimes known the soul to be most healthful and vigorous, when the outward man has been in the very arms of DEATH." To whom I thought Fidelia replied: "O my friend! we have a kind and compassionate Lord; his comforts to me, a poor, unworthy creature, are neither few nor small. I may well say, he feedeth me with his grace, and all his paths drop fatness to me. O my friends! my root is in the best soil, and the dew lies all night upon my branches. O let me ever be thankful for that sweet and transporting day, on which I found freedom of soul to rely upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is held

forth in the Gospel! Blessed be God for freedom to call the Redeemer my own, and to look up to him in an appropriating way! O the sweetness of the remembrance of it! It bears me down with the delightful weight of humbling love; electing, redeeming, and regenerating love commended itself by the sweetest and most persuasive eloquence unto my heart, and still it is the more endearing, because of its discriminating nature! O it is unspeakable! O the heights and depths! O divine love! Why is it that I, a poor unworthy, hell-deserving sinner, should be found thy favoured object! Amazing and miraculous grace! that ever the great salvation of the adorable Jesus hath laid hold on me, and preached itself into my very heart, notwithstanding I am the basest of all the human creation. Behold I see the wise, the moral, the rich, and the noble, standing at a distance from the great salvation, and strangers to the pardoning mercy of God; while I, the most unworthy of all, am fed with the comforts of his love. It is thy doing, O thou omnipotent Saviour; and it is marvellous in my eyes: thou lovest merely because thou wilt love, and pardonest only because such is thy good pleasure."

After some time, her friend addressed himself to her as follows: I perceive, Fidelia, and I am glad to see it, that you do not quarrel with the providence of God, because he hath given you but a scanty measure of worldly substance; you do not seem offended, because you are poor, and have not fortunes to leave your children.

No, my friend, replied she, I am not angry; for the Lord doth all things well, and my lot hath been

rightly and wisely determined; I would not, on any account, that it had been otherwise than it has been. Whatever beauty others may think there is in growing riches, I must tell you for my own part, that I would not for the world have been born to be rich; for wherever they come, "riches are sure to be a burden to the possessor:" therefore, he who well understood the nature of things, says, "he that increases in them doth also increase in sorrow." I have always found my own corruptions to be burden enough for me to bear up the hill towards Mount Zion, without a weight of thick clay, however brilliant, on my shoulders.

Here my guide gently jogged me, and said, "This is most excellently judged of Fidelia, for 'as weights of lead are to the courser, when he runs for the plate, so is gold to the follower of Christ.'" It is very difficult to possess gold, without loving it; and you may know that the love of money "is the root of all evil;" insomuch that it is next to impossible for a rich man to be a true and humble Christian.\*

\* Within the few years that I have been a professor, I have known many useful members of Gospel churches, utterly spoiled by getting rich. From spiritual, savoury, and sociable brethren, they have dwindled into mere formalists and muck-worms, barren fig-trees in the garden of God; and such they are likely to continue, till it is the pleasure of God to revive them again. Many you will find convinced of this doctrine to their judgment, whose affections are altogether unmoved; therefore they compass sea and land to get money, notwithstanding they have the greatest reason to believe, that it will add to their trouble. Yea, although they have many stings of conscience on this account, still they will do what they can to increase it. How absurd is man!

In the mean-while, Fidelia continued and said: Had I been full, I might, with many others, have forgotten my God; but my narrow circumstances have furnished me with many precious opportunities of beholding the goodness of his providence and faithfulness to his promise; which opportunities I had certainly lost, had I been rich. I think I see such beauty in the unerring dispensations of providence towards me, that no way so suitable could have been chosen, as the very way which my gracious God hath taken to bring me to himself and his glory. Well may I cry out with the apostle, "O the depth and riches, both of his wisdom and knowledge!"

Filled with admiration at the goodness of God, Fidelia stopped here, and Veratio said to me: It has been, Novitio, the error of many writers, and still more of readers, to suppose, that small entertainment, and but few profitable hints are to be drawn from a state of low life; but if we will make true religion our theme, where must we go to find it? If we inquire at the palace of his grace Elatus, there we see all the pomp of magnificent pride driving on in its lofty career; or if we call at the seat of my lord Ganeo, we are immediately confronted by darkness and revelling; and the delicate board, though covered with the most tasteful viands, is altogether destitute of that religion which would prevent it becoming a snare to the owner. It is much more likely, that, if in quest of real religion, you will find her with wretched Lazarus at the gate, rather than within the hotel of Dives; for not many wise men after the flesh, not many no-

ble, are called to the possession of true religion ; but the poor have the Gospel preached to them ; and, among the lower class of people, religion dwells in its greatest power, 'as you may see in the case of Fidelia, whose mind is overwhelmed with holy joy, even in the midst of her extreme sufferings.

It was now, I thought, that one of her friends asked her, how it was with her as to the comforts of life. To which she replied : O my friends, I have all things, and abound ; our gracious God hath promised, that our bread shall be given, and our water shall be sure ; and to the praise of his providence, I can say, that I have always found the promise verified, for he is a God, keeping covenant, and full of faithfulness. This I have always had reason to note, but more especially been sensible of it since the death of my dear Fidelio ; since then I have been necessitated to live by faith on the promises of a provident God. I have been enabled to trust, and never knew the promises to fail, nor the Lord to fall short of any word he hath spoken. How shall I praise thee, thou God of infinite fullness, who from thine own inexhaustible stores hath richly supplied all my wants ? I long to appear before thee, O thou immaculate Redeemer, that I may see thee in the effulgence of thy glory ; for here I see darkly as in a glass. Many are the refreshing gales of sweet consolation which I have had in the ordinances of thy grace ; but now, when I compare them with that unfathomable depth of undecaying comfort, which I see immediately before me, they are like the small dust of the balance,

when compared to the world; or like the drop of water which hangs at the bucket, when compared to the vast ocean. O the divine blaze of heavenly glory, which already begins to beam upon my soul even on this wilderness-side of Jordan! O thou new and heavenly Jerusalem, I am already overcome with thine excellent beauties! O what must it be when put in full possession! And even now, nothing hinders me from feeding on the fattest of my comforts, but this thin and almost rent veil of mortality. Let it once be rent, as soon as it will, and I shall with unspeakable joy sustain all the stupendous blaze of thy unsullied glories.

I long, O I long to join yonder glorious throng, yonder radiant church in the realms above! I long to press into yonder bright assembly, which by faith I see surrounding the eternal throne, that I might mingle my humble notes with their harmonious voices, and with them sing the praise of God and the Lamb. Hasten thy pace, O ever tardy time! Ye moments, swiftly end your destined flight! Lord, shake my glass, that the sands may speedily pass through! But I see, holy and revered is his name, that there remains but a few particles more in the life-end of my glass, and they will speedily be down; then face to face I shall see the glorious object of my supreme delight, and forever offer up perfect adoration to him that loved me, and washed me in his blood. With unspeakable delight I shall behold that glorious face which once was marred with shame and spitting. These eyes which have so often turned aside after vanity, these very eyes shall in transport gaze on the

King in his beauty ; this tongue shall delight to praise him eternity along ; and these hands, which once were the instruments of unrighteousness, shall cast at his majestick feet the glorious crown wherewith this worthless head shall be adorned. O happy, happy day, that brings home the longing exile, and lands the weary pilgrim upon the shore of rest, to be ever, ever with the Lord !

Fidelia finishing here, her friend again said to her : My dear sister, I rejoice with you, that the Lord is pleased to indulge you with such a measure of his sensible presence, on this, which otherwise would be a day of severe trial to you ; but the Redeemer's presence makes even Death itself not only tolerable, but desirable and easy. But in the midst of your sensible enjoyments, you seem as if you had forgotten your three little children ; tell me, Fidelia, have you no uneasiness at the thoughts of leaving them behind you, in a land of sin and sorrow ? Would it not, with submission to the divine will, be desirable to you to be spared to see them brought up to a capacity of doing for themselves.

To whom Fidelia replied : The Lord hath been a husband to the widow, and I am persuaded he will be a father to the fatherless, and an all-sufficient stay to the helpless orphan. My children are dear, but my Saviour is infinitely dearer to me : and I have got such a taste of the grapes of the heavenly Canaan, that I cannot think of abiding on this wilderness-side of Death. My heart is already gone over, O why do I tarry any longer behind ? but the Lord's time is the best. Pray for me, my friends, that I may not offend the best of Beings,

by my impatience to be gone, but submissively wait for the dissolving moment. Then her friend tenderly rejoined: But have your companions in warfare no weight at all upon your mind? Can you with pleasure leave them in this inhospitable world? She replied: Alas, my friend! of what service can my presence be to a warfaring church? I can be of no use at all. But I know that he who hath chosen, purchased, and sanctified it, will safely keep it, and every individual member of it, to the perfect day: for of all whom the Father hath given to the Mediator, he hath not lost; he will not lose any thing; no, not the weakest nor the most contemptible; for all shall be gathered safe to his heavenly kingdom.

Give the impartial love of a dying woman to our fellow-church members, and tell them from me, that it is the last request of their dying friend, that they live at a greater distance from the world. There is, alas! too much, by far too much, likeness between the precious children of God and the children of the world. Some of them, in a manner very unbecoming, court the fantastical honours, and others seem too eagerly to thirst after the perishing, unsatisfactory riches of this transitory and delusive world, which, if they could obtain, would all lose their beauty on a dying day. O! a dying day gives us clear views of things, and exceedingly diminishes the value of gold and silver. Bid them, therefore, behold the profits and honours of this world with death-bed eyes, then they will readily declare that all is vanity. And others of our friends there are, who but too much delight in the



vain and empty pleasures of the flesh, which at best are no more than an ærial dream. But, O! tell them from me, that the honours of life are lighter than chaff, and will be driven away when Christ comes with his fan in his hand, thoroughly to purge his floor: then my friends they will appear lighter than nothing, and altogether vanity. O that they could be persuaded, that gold and silver is one of the most dangerous burdens that a Christian possibly can carry; the love of money is the root of all evil. They will never repent when they come to a death-bed, that they are not rich, and cannot leave fortunes to their children. Tell them, that if the Almighty in his wisdom, sees that riches are for their good, he will, in his benevolence, bestow them without their immoderate care, or without injuring their minds in the least. O let Christians beware of accounting gain to be godliness. Tell them from me, that the pursuit of worldly pleasure is the certain way to dishonour their God, and destroy the peace of their own souls. O persuade them, as Christians, to seek the things which come from above where the blessed Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God. Let them know, that conformity to the vain customs of the world, is highly injurious to the cause and interest of Christ, and has a natural tendency to harden poor sinners in their rebellion against God. When they come to a death-bed, as I am now, all those names of honour, the applause of mankind, and all the comfort which springs from the possession of riches, will vanish away as empty vapours and smoke. Verily, all things here below are vanity. The divine

religion of the ever-loving and ever-lovely Jesus is the one thing needful--the only thing that will yield satisfaction on a dying day.

Fidelia having exhausted her strength, remained a considerable time silent, and Veratio turned himself toward me, and said,--

Now, Novitio, this is divine religion with a witness! Here are riches in the midst of poverty, health in the midst of sickness, joy in the midst of pain, and glory rising out of misery. What an exalted soul is this! How much of heaven is now let down into this blessed cottage! How glorious, how excellent is thy religion, O thou amiable Saviour of mankind! blessed is he, the life of whose soul is the only begotten of the Father!

Know my friend, that Fidelia was daughter to a worthy tradesman named Philalethes, one who was a constant lover and a punctual observer of truth, as all that dealt with him would readily testify. Philalethes was parent to a numerous offspring, whom he carefully instructed in the principles of religion. As soon as his tender infants began to lisp forth their innocent and child-like prattlings, he used to deal with them as rational creatures, and studied to impress their minds with a sense of the greatness and omnipresence of God; particularly of the purity of his nature, and his utter aversion to sin. It was his constant custom to maintain regularly, at a certain hour twice a day, the worship of God in his family, at which he took care that no business, however urgent, should hinder the attendance of either children or servants, accounting it his honour, as he found it his pleas-

sure, to go before his family in the worship of their Maker. And well knowing that the Almighty delighteth more in the gates of Zion than in all the dwellings of Jacob, he carefully led his whole family duly to attend the publick worship of God, during which he accustomed his children, from their youngest years, to a decent and becoming gravity in the house of prayer. He suffered no part of the holy Sabbath to be devoted to vain amusement or worldly business; the morning thereof was chiefly employed in divine worship, and in putting his family in mind of the solemnity of the sanctuary service which they were to enter upon; and in the evening his care was to improve the sermons which they had heard, and administering suitable instructions to the various branches of his family, according to their several capacities. He greatly confided in that word of promise, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6. And although he perfectly knew that he could not give them grace, he believed it his duty to inure them to the forms of religion. Encouraged by the promise, and well knowing that human endeavours avail but little without divine influence, he was a fervent wrestler\* with God for the blessing, and had the pleasure of seeing that his endeavours and prayers were not in vain; as his family, even from their younger years, were properly restrained from the fashionable vices which corrupt our youth, and were perfect strangers to the brilliance of a ball,

\*Gen. xxxii. 24.

and the irreligious entertainment of a theatre. In the disposal of his children in marriage, he was not so careful about worldly advantages, as he was strictly nice in his inquiries, whether there was a likeness in their natural disposition, the visible appearance of real grace in the soul, and a harmony in their religious sentiments; for he well knew, that unless husband and wife were of the same opinion, both with regard to doctrine and manner of worship, there is but little prospect of that union which is so essential to mutual happiness. Fidelity he married to a worthy young man of but a small fortune, whose name was Fidelio, a mechanical tradesman, who in their younger years sustained such losses in trade, as reduced him to the necessity of supporting his family by the labour of his hands; and no labour he thought too hard to support his wife and children, whom he so tenderly loved. But as one says in a certain place, it sometimes happens to a righteous person according to the deserts of the wicked, so it happened to Fidelity, for it pleased the Lord, a few years since, to take her husband away from her at a very short notice, to possess the heavenly diadem to which he was appointed. Her fervent and faithful friend, her diligent provider, being gone, she found herself in a melancholy situation left in an inhospitable world, with three tender and beloved infants, one of whom was but just weaned from the breast. But her God, her faithful God was the object of her trust. She sensibly felt the stroke, and was humbled under the afflicting dispensation; but never, never was the grieved Fidelity heard to alledge, that the

'Almighty Disposer dealt hardly with her; never was she known, in a way of murmuring and impatience, to say unto God, "What dost thou?"

On the other hand, she was careful to know whether she had not purchased the affliction to herself by an over-estimate for, and too much dependence on her husband; thereby withholding a part of her heart from, and infringing her duty of full dependence on God. In the times of her deepest distress she was wont thus to reason; I know, yea, I am fully persuaded that the Lord afflicteth not willingly; there must be necessity for it, ere he is pleased to apply the rod. Instead of mourning as one without hope, her principal care was, that the dispensation might be sanctified to her advantage and growth in grace, that she might live more upon and rest more fully on the Saviour who died for her. Fidelia was a woman who well knew how to plead a promise in the time of need; she was always but weak in body, but a powerful wrestler at the throne of grace; she was shy in courting, and modest in receiving favours from man; but at the throne of God she was importunate, and would not take a denial. Her circumstances being very low after the death of her husband, she was brought to the necessity of living by faith on a promising God, even for hers and her children's daily sustenance, which, I assure you, is far from being the easiest part of the exercise of faith.

Distressed Fidelia used to comfort herself in reflecting upon the regard which Jehovah has expressed towards the poor and needy, and especially his declaring himself "to be a husband to the widow,

a father to the fatherless, and a stay to the helpless orphan ;” and thus she was wont to reflect within herself : The glorious God, who hath seen it meet to take away my husband, hath graciously promised to be a husband himself ; and if he will be my husband, as he hath said, he will surely act the part of the best of husbands. The husband’s part is to direct, defend, and provide for his spouse ; and all this the Lord hath promised he will do for the widow who trusts in him. This is agreeable to the tenour of the promises in general, and, in particular, to that salutary word on which he has caused me to hope, where he hath declared himself a Sun and a Shield to his people. Here is heat to influence and quicken me in all my languor ; and here is a shield for safety, a shield of protection from all enemies, outward and inward : he addeth, I will give grace to support under, and to sanctify afflictions ; and when the work is finished, he says, I will give glory. This life is indeed a life of infinite wants, but here is provision made for them all ; for it is added, “I will withhold no good thing.” This is an ample provision made for all my necessities. Great as they are, the grace of the promise is infinitely greater. Here is a consolatory supply for the most desolate widow. I will therefore trust in the Lord, and not be afraid ; and so trusting I shall never be confounded, nor shall my hope be put to shame. This is the ground of my confidence ; he encourages the boldness of the weak, the poor and needy ; but abhors the timidity of the unbelieving. None are ever condemned for trusting in the Lord with a holy bold-

ness, in proportion to their necessities : my necessities are great ; therefore, O Lord, may my trust in Thee be strong.

It was thus she communed with her own heart, in profitable reflections upon the promises of God. She was likewise accustomed early to tell her children, that now they had no natural father, to provide for and dispose of them ; but that God had declared himself “ the father of the fatherless,” and she hoped that He would be a father to them.— Earnestly did she recommend them to the grace and protection of the divine Shepherd, who bears the lambs in his arms, and nourisheth them in his bosom. She prayed, and she hoped that God would be the guardian of their infant years, train them up in his own fear, nurture, and admonition ; provide for them all things necessary, and dispose of them to the glory both of his providence and grace. Thus her daily prayers were unto the Lord, and to him were all her cares committed ; nothing doubting, but in the unbounded beneficence of his nature, he would take special care of her and hers.

She lived in a constant reliance on the providence and promises of God, and was never disappointed ; notwithstanding her faith was frequently tried as with fire ; and now she is dying, could I paint to you the holy joys of her elevated soul, if you were possessed of all the wealth of the Indies, Novitio, you would willingly part with it, if it were possible that you could exchange your condition for such as hers. An explicit narration of Fidelia’s experience, would be of more use to the

church of Christ, than the voluminous, elaborate works of many learned doctors, who have not had the same experience ; for there hath been more religion in one week of her life, than in thirty years' preaching of some who are called masters of Israel. And now, Novitio, that you may know that God is not ashamed of the meanest of his saints, I have a mind once more to give you a view of the immaterial world ; thereby you will see, that the angels of God do not despise her because of her poverty.

This said, he again, in his usual manner, so strengthened my visual ray, that instantly I saw the place was filled with the heavenly hosts, who unweariedly ministered to the dying woman ; and she, notwithstanding in the embraces of Death, was so transported with holy joy, that she forgot the pains of dying. So fervently glowed the seraphick flame in her heart, and in such profusion the joys of approaching eternity were poured into her soul, that all sensation of pain seemed to be gone. By this time the lamp of nature only glimmered in the socket, she lay supinely stretched on her bed, longing and waiting for the dissolving moment, and so long as her voice continued articulate, she dispensed instructions to her friends, adoring the riches of electing, redeeming, and regenerating love. At last, perceiving that nature's sparks were almost extinguished, with eyes sublimely elevated, and holy triumph smiling in her countenance, with a voice which could scarcely be heard, she said : " Come, Father, come ! thou knowest I am waiting thy command." These were her last words, and in a few moments after she quickly departed, and



her glorified soul joined in fellowship with the ministers of heaven, formerly her invisible attendants. Now swift as thought they carried her to the blissful regions of eternal day; where she was received with joyful acclamations by all the hosts of the heaven of heavens: and the ever-adorable Redeemer pronounced her blessed, saying: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; thou hast been faithful over a few things, therefore thou shalt be a ruler over many." On which I thought a crown of righteousness was put upon her head by the pierced hand of the Redeemer; a palm of triumph given to her, and orders issued to put her in possession of the mansions near the jasper throne; where she strove to outdo Magdalene in praise, and to exalt her voice even above that of Mary, the mother of our Lord. Here was emulation without anger, the most earnest contention without any tincture of pride. Who should be least in their own esteem, who should most glorify and exalt sovereign free and distinguished grace, were the springs of all their heavenly debates. Here Manasseh vied with the sweet singer of Israel, the man after God's own heart; the crucified thief, with Enoch and Abraham; Ruth, the Moabitess, with Deborah, the mother of Israel; Jairus, the jailor, contended with Paul the apostle; and babes from the womb claimed a right to sing louder than Solomon, the wisest of men. Here parents strove to surpass their children, and children to exceed the praises of their parents; masters their former servants, and servants their masters; ministers

their people, and people their ministers: and every one urged his claim by rational and consistent arguments. As I was listening to the sweet contention, and gazing on the unutterable glories of the heavenly world, my beloved sleep departed, the unwelcome morning rushed in upon me, and bereaved me of the precious delights I had enjoyed in the night. So I awoke to disappointment and sorrow, finding myself still in the tents of Kedar, possessed as heretofore of that unclean nature whence every evil to me proceeds, and still go burdened and groaning, because of a body of Death, while in this tabernacle. Yea, after all, perhaps, to be tired of this world, and yet afraid to venture into another.

THE END.











